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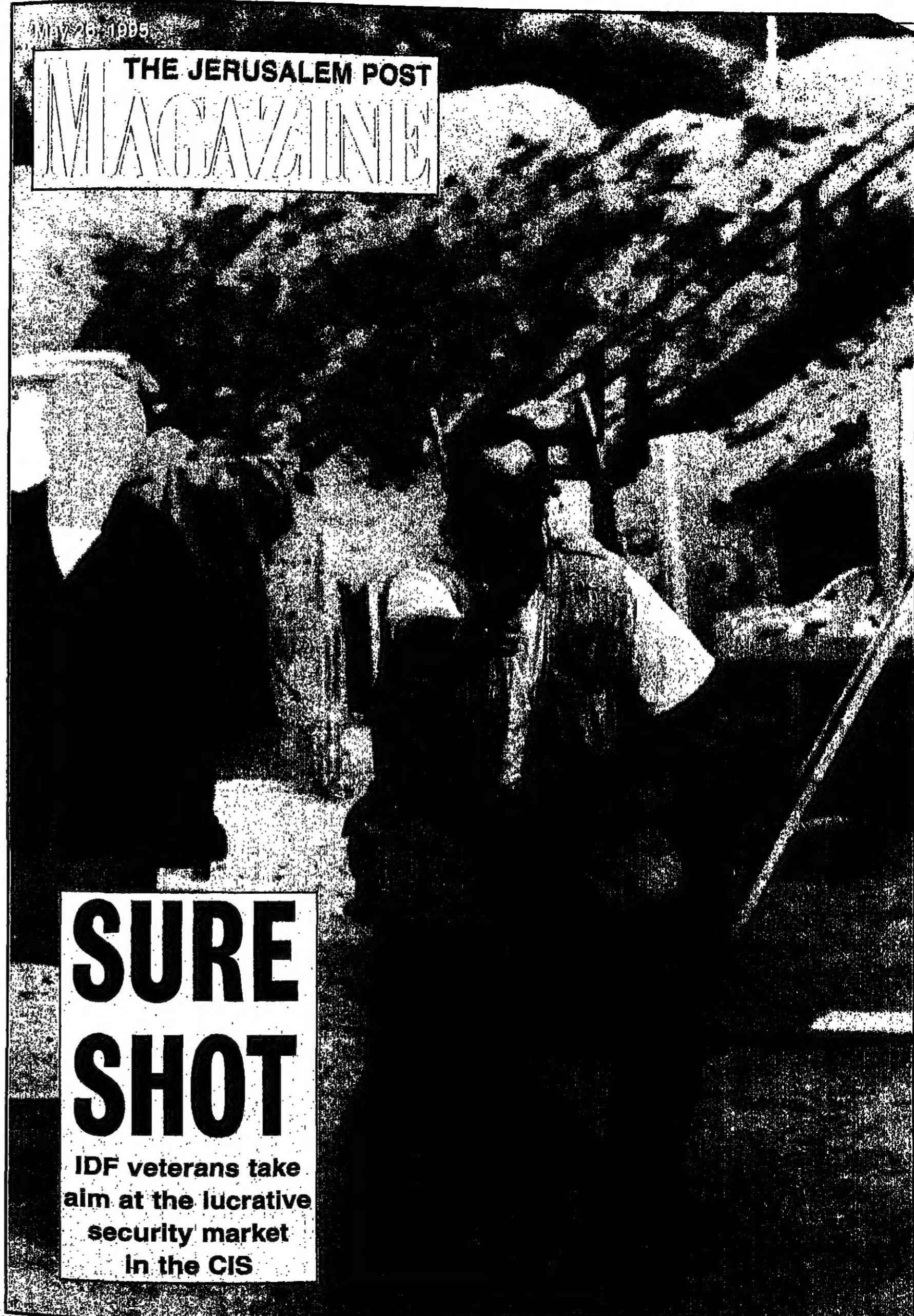
The best service begins with toll-free



May 26, 1995

THE JERUSALEM POST

MAGAZINE



SURE SHOT

IDF veterans take aim at the lucrative security market in the CIS

مخازن الذهب

on a city... Their... Top de... best... for... It's... it's the new number that will bring you even closer to all your customers... For more details and details, dial: 177-022-5050... The best service begins with toll-free... JERUSALEM POST MONEY MAGAZINE

JERUSALEM POST MAGAZINE

MAY 26, 1995
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FAYE BITTKER
Associate Editor:
FERN ALLEN
Art Director:
RUTH KOVEL
Copy Editor:
DANI HOMBURG

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SPECIAL DELIVERY

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE

I was very much amused by Netty Gross's reactions to the brazen hussies of Tel Aviv (Out There, May 12). It was so utterly typical of the emotions aroused in the breasts of gently raised matrons, particularly those of an intellectual cast.

In 40 years of seagoing I have encountered - quite literally - thousands of prostitutes of half-a-hundred nationalities. A seaman has very little time in port and no time at all for courtship even in the unlikely event that he speaks the language of the port. If he is looking for companionship - and what man is not? - he must choose by necessity among the ladies of the night.

They can be a lot of fun, but they are no competition for the girl next door. They are rarely as intelligent, as personable - or even as pretty. The women who turn to prostitution in a developed country like Israel or France or the US are not the former cheerleaders or porn queens. They are usually the ones who had to struggle to get dates, or passing grades.

I would exclude from these generalizations the women of poor postwar nations like Japan and Korea and many present-day South American or Asian countries. These women are working to feed their parents and send their brothers through school and many of them are fine, self-sacrificing human beings.

Writers tend to romanticize prostitutes. The French are particularly prone to this. Sex sells - and always has. The proud, streetwise hustler may exist in ports I have not visited, but I suspect that her natural habitat is the novel.

Mrs. Gross, you need not worry about your husband or the husbands of your friends being smitten, secretly or otherwise, by the spectacle of "raw female sexuality." They would probably be scared to death - as would this Ancient Mariner.
Charles A. Bortz
Jerusalem

GUTSY LADIES

Netty C. Gross's recent column gives an interesting post-feminist interpretation of the role of the prostitute in our society.

Traditional feminist canon rejects totally the notion that prostitutes are powerful or in control of their lives. But post-feminist dissenters have begun to reject this prudish notion. It takes a certain amount of guts to live the lives they live. Grit, for sure. "No sex, no lies, no videotape" was a brilliant credo for *The Jerusalem Post*.
Debby Blall
Jerusalem

ABBIE DESERVES BETTER

Who is David Isaacson and how did he come to be chosen to review *Run Run Run: The Lives of Abbie Hoffman* ("Aberration," May 12)? He sounds like someone Abbie would have been ashamed of as a human being and, if alive today, Abbie would have easily undone this self-righteous reviewer.

I knew Abbie personally in the '60s, heard him speak at many rallies and university lectures. The reviewer has laced his review with such prejudice and opinion against Abbie that it would not surprise me if Isaacson still believes that all long-haired people should be punished.

For the hip generation of the '60s and early '70s, Abbie Hoffman was an intellectual radical giant who tried to change America's thinking toward a more human, understanding set of values. Most [of those] like him who tried and hung onto their values of equality, justice and freedom, were eventually killed, beaten, imprisoned or, like me, expatriated. Amerika should be spelled with a "K" and Isaacson should also. Give Isaacson books on the John Birch Society to review.
Gershon Mizrahi
Rosh Pina

Editor's note: David Isaacson sported shoulder-length hair for 10 years and has attended 21 Grateful Dead concerts.

PUSH BIKES

Just for the record: The first large bike ride (340 cyclists) through Israel took place in November 1992, sponsored by Classic Tours, London; and Ayala Tours, Jerusalem. The tour raised money for Ravenswood and EMMS Hospitals.

In addition, the British Heart Foundation had a similar ride two weeks in a row this month. Logistics by Chaim Rockman, Yossi Assaroff and Ayala Tours.

The rest of the article was excellent and really describes cycling in Israel.
Eva Rockman
Mevaseret Zion

FUNDING FINDS A WAY

In Sue Fishkoff's very interesting and informative article about the Jewish refugees in Shanghai during the 1930s and '40s ("Waiting Out The War," April 28) there was a statement that merits correction. Ms. Fishkoff writes that the well-established Iraqi and Russian Jewish communities and their wealthy leaders helped the newcomers, and that until December 1941 funds were provided by the Joint Distribution Committee. She goes on to say that after Pearl Harbor, when all of Shanghai was occupied by the Japanese, "funding from the JDC was halted."

This last statement is incorrect. To be sure, it was no longer possible for the JDC, an American agency, to send money to a Japanese-controlled area. However, acting on instructions from JDC in New York, which she had received earlier to cover just such a war possibility, the JDC representative in Shanghai, Laura Margolis-Jarblum, arranged with some of the veteran Jewish leaders to borrow funds from them, to be reimbursed after the war.

This arrangement worked even after Margolis-Jarblum was interned by the Japanese in February 1943.
Abraham Cohen
Tel Aviv

the israel museum, jerusalem

EXHIBITIONS

Refined Imagination
Jewelry by the prominent Israeli designer, Esther Knobel.

My Way - Tim Gidal, Photographs from May 31
Works of the pioneer photographer who helped change the face of modern photojournalism from the 1920s on.

Bracha Lichtenberg-Ettinger: Halala - Autilework
Recent works on paper by an Israeli artist living in Paris.

Samaritan Mosaic Floor
4th century CE, discovered in El Khirbe.

New Acquisitions In the Department of Prints and Drawings, 1893-94

Petra In the News
Objects and coins testifying to Petra's prosperity.

Islamic Art
Inlaid metalwork - 13-15 cent. and illustrations of the Shahname, Iran and India, 14-19 cent.

Current Cash Value
The history of coinage in Eretz Israel and the ancient world.

Heroes: Past and Present
The image and place in our lives of a hero, with activities in the Ruth Youth Wing.



Some 300 objects from the renowned collections of European princes and aristocrats, including the Prince and Princess of Liechtenstein, the Rothschild Family and others. Additional special exhibition fee. Guided tours in English, Mon., Thur., 12:30 p.m.

The Crucified Man from Givat Hamivtar
Casualty of a crucified male from the Roman era, together with a replica of his heel bones placed by an iron nail. At the Rockefeller Museum.

TICHO HOUSE

Anna Ticho - Judean Hills, 1970s

Sun., Mon., Wed., Thur. 10-5; Tue. 10-10;

Fri. 10-2

Story-telling Theatre, Ages 4-8, Sun. 4:30 p.m.

Library: Sun.-Thur. 10-4; Fri. 10-12.

Coffee Shops: Sun.-Thur. 10 a.m. to midnight;

Fri. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Sat. night, all night.



YOUTH WING

Tue., May 30:
4:30 p.m.: Story Hour with Michel Anad.

5 p.m.: In Step and Sound in the Nobleman's Courtyard. Concert combining music and dance by the students of the Rubin Academy for Music and Dance, and a visit to the Princely Taste exhibition with Ella Reggev. Ages 8+. Youth Wing Auditorium.

Library and Feinstein Recycling Room:

Sun., Mon., Wed., Thur. 2-5 p.m.; Tue. 4-7 p.m.

Story House: ages 4-7

Tue. 4:30 (Heb.); Wed. 4 p.m. (Eng.)

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

CONCERTS: Performance by Immigrant musicians.

Fri., May 26, 11 a.m., Ticho House.

Maria Elbert - piano: Mozart, Schubert, Chopin, Debussy.

Music in the Exhibition: Princely Taste, Golden Strings Quartet.

Tue., May 23, 8 p.m.

GALLERY TALKS: Princely Taste by Rivka Weiss-Bloch.

Tue., May 30, 6 p.m. (In English).

Princely Taste by Ella Reggev. Tue., May 30, 7 p.m. (In Hebrew)

The Israel Festival at the Museum May 26, 27, 28, 30

Tickets at agencies or at the Museum one hour before the performance. Tel: 250905, 240896.

MOVIE: *Prêt à Porter (Ready to Wear)* (USA 1994, 130 min.) Dir. Robert Altman, with Sophia Loren, Cher, Tim Robbins, top fashion models and designers. A look into the world of high fashion.

June 1, 9 p.m., Auditorium.

GUIDED TOURS IN ENGLISH

Meet at Main Building Information Desk for

Museum Highlights: Sun., Mon., Wed., Thur. 11 a.m. & 3 p.m.

Fri. 11 a.m., Tue. 4:30 p.m.

Archaeological Galleries: Mon., Thur. 2 p.m.

Judaica & Ethnography: Sun., Wed., 2 p.m.

Shrine of the Book: At Shrine entrance

Sun., Mon., Wed., Thur. 1:30 p.m.; Tue., 3 p.m.; Fri. 12:45 p.m.

Meet at Entrance Pavilion Information Desk for tours in:

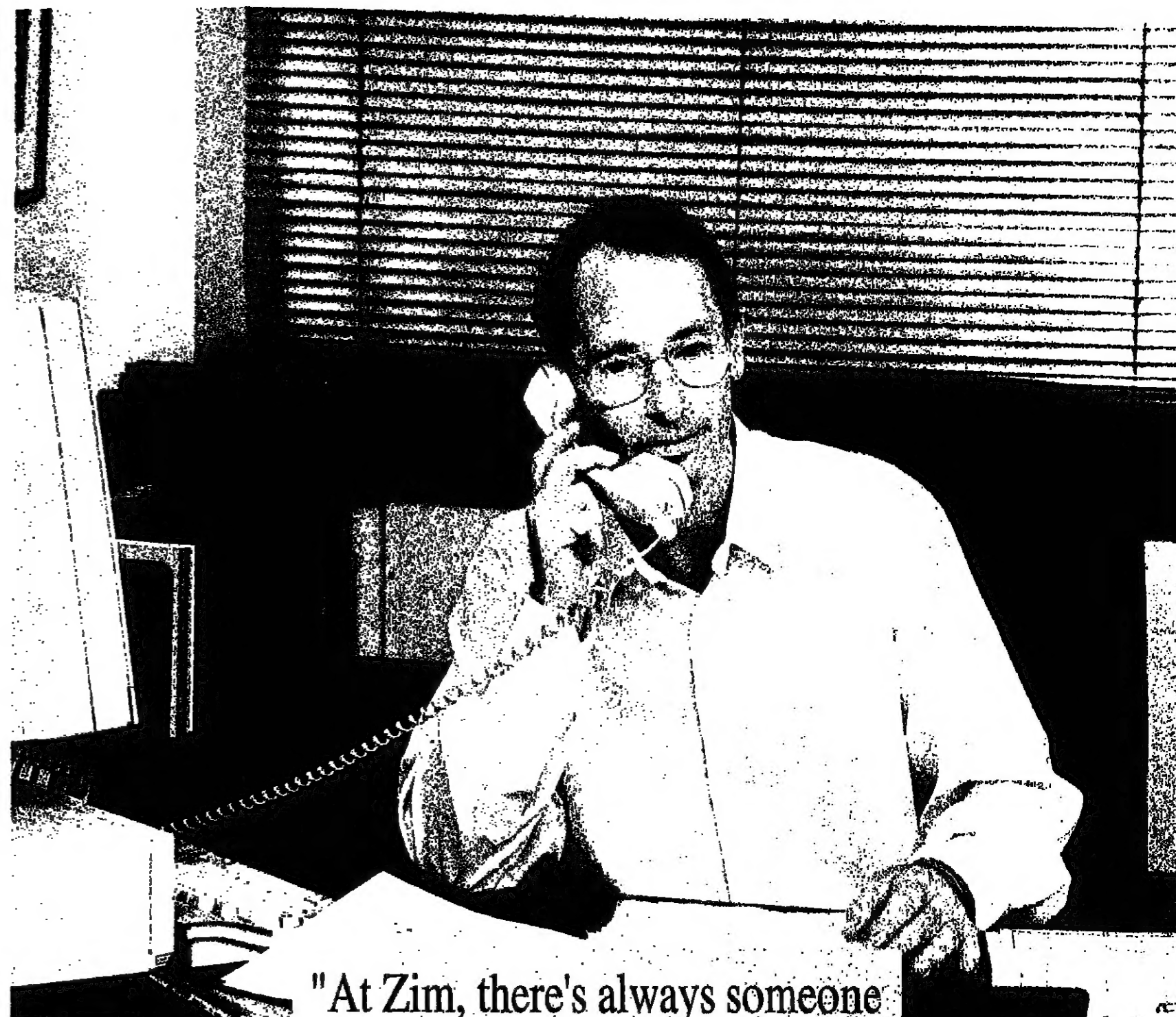
German Sun., 2 p.m. French Sun., 2:30 p.m.

VISITING HOURS

Sun., Mon., Wed., Thur. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tue. 4 p.m.-10 p.m.

Shrine of the Book also open Tue. 10 a.m.-10 p.m.

Fri. 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Information: 708811.



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ODED COHEN
Managing Director
Gadot Biochemical Industries Ltd.

ALL WAYS ZIM



FAST FORWARD

OUT THERE

How to answer the phone and influence people

By Herb Keiron

Brrring, rings the phone. My arm stretches out to answer. My instinct is to answer with a hearty, singsong "hell-low." Maybe a humorous, though queer, "hell-lew-u." Perhaps even a friendly "Howdy there." That's how I was raised. That's how I was reared. That's how I used to answer the phone. Cheerful. Chummy. And, most importantly, polite. "Hello," my mom used to say, "always be polite on the phone. It sets a good impression." "Son," my dad would say, "make sure you're always phone friendly." And, goodness knows, I was nothing if not phone friendly.

IN JUNIOR high school, during the days when my friend Dale

was answering the phone with a smart-aleck "Dale's butcher shop, what's your beef? (yuk-yuk-yuk)." I was answering with a hell-low.

When Donnie changed the phrase in high school to "Don's bakery, which crumb do you want to talk to?" I was still bellowing out hell-low.

And in college, when my hairy-chested roommates were answering the phone with a macho, Sylvester-Stallone-sounding "Yo, babe," I continued to greet callers with "howdy, howdy, howdy-doo."

And then I came to Israel. The phone culture here just doesn't allow for "howdy, howdy, howdy-doo." It's not a "howdy, howdy, howdy-doo" kind of country. You say "howdy, howdy, howdy-doo" and you're an easy mark, a pushover.

So when the phone rings, I overcome my basic instincts. I puff up my chest, lower my voice

a few octaves, and grunt out a Neanderthal "allo." I admit I feel kind of stupid doing this. I mean, here I am with

salutation. But instead, I make a conscious effort to be something I'm not - to sound like a native Israeli imitating an Italian.

But it's all very necessary. Because while "hello" signifies American cream-puff, "allo," signals Israeli tough. "Hello" says "take me for a ride"; "allo" says "don't mess with me because I've been around the block once or twice."

WHICH IS the message I want to convey when answering the phone. Especially since, and I'm not exaggerating, a good 25 percent of the calls I get at home are wrong numbers.

Half these callers think I'm the telephone operator at the local municipality, the other half think I'm a clerk at Bank Leumi.

And these aren't the kind of people who, if they dial a wrong number, humbly apologize and deferentially lay down the

receiver.

"Bank Leumi," the guy shouts at the other end.

"Sorry, wrong number," I reply. Click.

No apology, no nothing. Just "click." It's like I'm the one at fault. Like I did something wrong answering the phone. Like I should be ashamed of myself for wasting his telecard.

Then there are others who won't take no for an answer.

"Municipality?" someone will ask on the other end.

"No, sorry," I'll answer.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure."

"Well it used to be."

"Maybe. But no more."

"Well do you know what the number is?"

By this time, I'd really like to answer with a "click."

BUT THE most annoying are the folks who ring your number and demand to know who you are.

These are the nuisances who, when you answer the phone, blurt out, "Who is this?"

Now, if I answered the phone in a friendly manner, I would be pulled by my voice and feel obliged to reply to all questions in a friendly manner. The unknown caller would ask who I am, and I'd respond with a full life history.

But not when I answer "allo."

Then, staying in character consistent with my voice, I can grunt back, "Who am I? Listen, moron, who are you? You're the one who called me, remember?"

"Allo" is also good for dealing with your unreasonably early morning callers.

In the "hello" mode, you have to pretend you weren't really asleep when the phone woke you.

"Hello," you answer at 5 in the morning, slumber audible in your voice.

"What," you'll hear from the other end of the phone, a sound of disbelief usually from a distant cousin overseas unaware that Israel is not on Eastern Standard Time. "Did I wake you?"

"Naw," you'll croak out, lying because you feel guilty for sleeping. Lying because you're conditioned to think that sleeping is for the weak. Lying because you don't want to get caught, lazy-like, in bed at 5 in the morning, an hour when neighbors have already recited the morning prayers, jogged a couple of kilometers, and are now busying themselves with getting hotcakes on the griddle.

"Naw," you say, "I wasn't sleeping, just resting."

But if you answer "allo" in the early hours, whole new vistas open up. You can tell the truth. You can let your hair down. You can admit that you sleep. You can say, "Of course I was sleeping, you clod. What do you think I do at 5 in the morning, milk cows?"

The beauty of "allo" is that it gives you carte blanche to be a jerk in return.



this ability to speak perfect, accent-less English; with this ability to utter a very inviting

GUARANTEED TO PLAY NON-SCIENTIFIC Mivchan America'i!

by G. H. Freedman @ 55

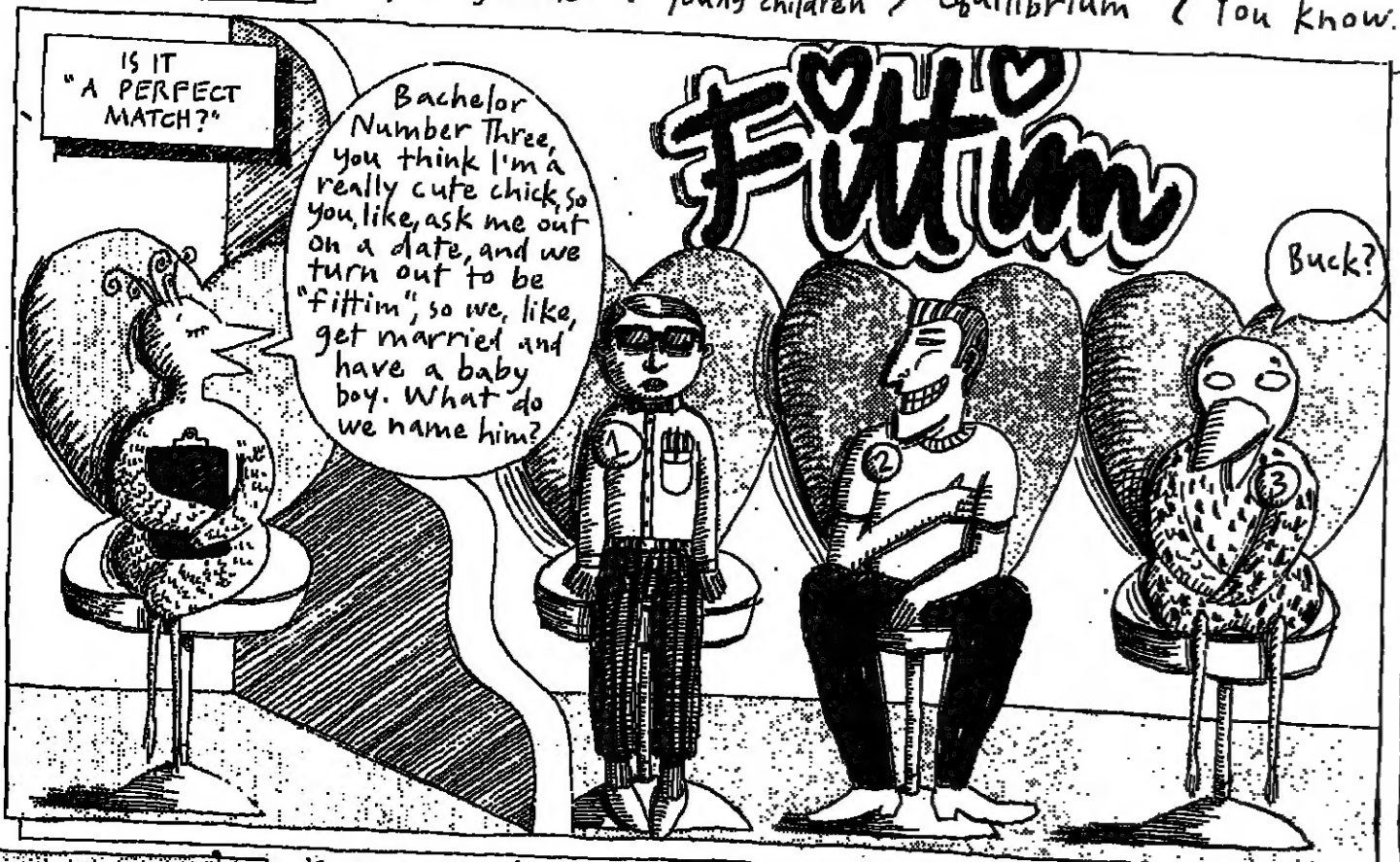
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE WORD FITTIM?

A. "A perfect match, thus the name of the Israeli version of the game-show that would not die, The Dating Game"

B. "The terrible twos." Bouts of surliness in young children

C. Even-steven. A post 'tit for tat' equilibrium

D. Hinges. Like on doors. You know.



FITTIM is C: even-steven. It's often used in a retributive context, as in "Now that you've hit me and I've hit you back, we're Fittim, okay?" But it could be used in a more positive sense as well. "Hey, we're Fittim now that you've saved my life after I saved yours..."

THE JERUSALEM POST MAGAZINE

SEA FOR YOURSELF

Announcing the opening of phase 3 of the project. All apartments facing the sea.

High-flying hoopster finds his niche in high-tech

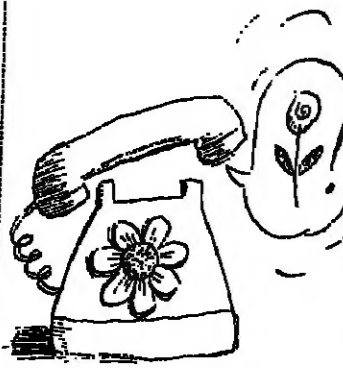
By Carl Schrag

"If I want music, I turn on MTV," says Shai Sharf. "If I want to talk to somebody, I pick up the telephone."

Unfortunately, the telephone systems used by many companies often seem intent on serenading their callers with MTV's latest hits. Sharf notes with irony that companies spend millions to get potential customers to call them, but practically nothing on assuring that each call gets handled efficiently.

When incoming calls are greeted with a recording promising a live answer "in the order received," he says, many callers hang up and dial again. All that achieves is to increase

the system overload even more. "When you finally do get through to a person, nobody



knows where to put your call," he says, comparing such handling to a bad Jackie Mason routine.

Sharf is president of Missing Link, a leader in the high-tech field of merging computer and telephone services to increase efficiency and customer service.

"In the past, the telephone people and the computer people each said, 'Keep away from my turf,'" Sharf explains. "Now, a lot of companies say they can interface your computer system with your telephone system. We're different. We say, 'We will take over your telephone system.' We are the missing link that brings the two technologies together."

MISSING LINK was born in the US, where Sharf went in 1980 on a basketball scholarship to Tulane University in New Orleans.

He went there primarily because he wanted to play ball. Serious studies were not a high priority, and he says he didn't even know that Tulane was an excellent school.

The joke was in for a big shock when his coaches and teachers told him he would be expected to turn in a decent performance in the classroom as well as on the basketball court.

His first couple of semesters were difficult. Sharf was surprised by the emphasis everyone wanted him to put on studies, and his teachers were insulted by his assumption that grades were secondary to basketball. By his sophomore year, however, he got his priorities straight and he graduated in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in computer science.

After graduation, he opened a company to further the independent study project he had done on voice recognition, in which computers can respond to human voice commands. "I knew I had something that was special at the time," he says.

He made his first sale the following year to no less a client than Eastman Kodak. "I was competing against some of the biggest names in the business," he says. "It was all quite an adventure."

He won the contract, which was to develop a computerized system enabling callers to verify the employment history of workers at any Kodak plant around-the-clock.

"I hired an answering service in Rochester, New York, and paid them to answer the phone saying 'Missing Link,'" Sharf explains. "Then I told Kodak, 'You have local support.' You need hutzpa, but it worked."

Sharf says the technology remains essentially the same today



Shai Sharf phone home: A local jock successfully merges computer and telephone technologies.

as it was a decade ago. The main difference: the systems his company sells now fulfill more functions.

He describes it as no less than a revolution in the way business is done. The secret is simple. "We can give personal service over the phone," he says.

In the late 1980s, Missing Link began to sell systems to Israeli companies. Sharf says he started with the big banks and moved into increasingly diverse fields.

Today, when you call the airport for flight information, you use your tone phone to walk through a variety of menus and get information quickly and accurately. In any of four languages. If you're a flower grower, you can call Flower Phone, a special line maintained by the growers' association to give information about market prices in Europe.

Once a company adopts the technology, he continues, it's easy to tailor it to specific needs. Thus, banks offer account information in a variety of languages, including Yiddish.

IN 1993, Sharf moved Missing Link to Ramat Gan. "I had started flying back and forth all the time," he explains. "Things looked good here, so I made a quick decision." He describes this country as a totally different place from the

place he left 15 years ago. "All of a sudden, it's a country with a digital telephone system, cable TV and service. You have good restaurants with people who serve you and people who leave tips."

"Many of the yordim [emigrants] who went to school abroad and stayed are returning now," he adds. "Their contribution is evident."

"When I was a child, people said Israelis had tons of talent, but the money was made by foreigners. Now, the local people get a bigger piece of the pie."

The work ethic also has changed a lot, Sharf says. "We work very hard in Israeli high-tech," he says. "It's very competitive with the US."

Conventional wisdom says that employee costs are lower here than in the US. That may still be true, but Sharf notes that fringe benefits jack up true labor costs here way beyond the salaries paid.

For instance? The question seems to make him a bit uncomfortable, but it doesn't take him long to think of an example. "It's important to my workers that I give them lunch every day," he says. "I don't understand it. Why don't they prefer money?"

ENDNOTES

Aliya Bet illegal immigration under the British Mandate 1934-1948
Also known as "Ha'apala"

Number of immigrants who arrived 115,000

Number interned in Cyprus until Israel was established 51,500

Immigrant refugee certificates for Palestine issued to 1,000 "Jewish Orphaned Children" 1942

Compiled by Kelly Hartog

SCENE AND HEARD

Stars, and their gazers, come out for a New Middle East summer

By Allison Kaplan Sommer

It's almost that time of year again. The onset of spring and the unveiling of the Israel Festival is the start of what could be called "celebrity gridlock" season. Each summer, particularly those following the Oslo agreement and the famous handshakes on the White House lawn (remember those?), more and more of the rich and famous have decided to grace the New Middle East with their onstage presence.

This year, the list of concerters is impressive, if a little geared toward the older set: Joe Cocker, Bobby McFerrin, Diana Ross, Liza Minnelli and Stevie Wonder. If they all actually show up — and we can count on at least one, if not more of them, canceling — they will go through the usual Israel celebrity treatment.

There's the ambush at the airport, resulting in unflattering photos showing the celebrity at his or her post-flight ruffled worst. There are the leaks to the press about the picky and petty demands the star has in the way of food and drink.

Then the poor performer dares to get a bit of sightseeing in, but often has trouble getting a good look at the Western Wall because it's hard to see beyond the pushing ring of press photographers hoping for that perfect shot, like the one they got of ex-Pepsi spokesman Michael Jackson enjoying a Coca-Cola. If the famous person is male, a shot of him wearing a kippa is a shoo-in for the papers.

Then there's the usual television and newspaper contest to see who can interview the celebrity first. Once upon a time, the interviews ran during the visit. Then they were moved up to the first day of arrival. These days, local TV stars jet over to get the big interview before the performer makes it. It doesn't always pay off. Recently, Stevie Wonder kept ratings sensation Dottie Topatz in New

York for three days, standing him up on three separate occasions. The third time, Topatz was finally so fed up, he went home sans videotape.

LAST, BUT definitely not least, there is the annual Zev Eizik crisis. Impresario Bizik seems to have a talent for attracting temperamental artists. Two years ago, it was Elton John's temper tantrum — when the singer, angry over airport bureaucracy and pushy photographers, flew back to London — and had to be coaxed back. Last year, it was Peter Gabriel's turn. He clashed with the Egyptian government, which canceled his scheduled peace-and-



love festival on a Sinai beach.

Some have claimed that Eizik secretly enjoys such crises and controversies. Many of us didn't believe it... until we found out who he is bringing this summer: none other than that crew-cut, Irish singing sensation Sinéad O'Connor. We are talking about the woman who spontaneously ripped up a picture of the pope on a TV show broadcast live across the US. And we are talking about a country in which local Christians protested violently because cable television screened *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

Nothing like playing it safe, Zev. Guess you just wanted to be sure not to break with tradition; heaven forbid June, July, and August should go by crisis-free. That might feel too much like summer vacation.

LIFE IN THE BIG CITY

"They're naked in bathtubs at Zion Square."

A passerby reacts to the outcry over an Israel Festival street theater performance. *The Jerusalem Post, May 26, 1990*

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As commander of a clandestine operation that challenged the British blockade of Palestine, Ada Sereni found friends in the highest places.

UNDERGROUND IN ITALY

By Abraham Rabinovich

THE JERUSALEM POST MAGAZINE

Even after half a century it was a moment to be savored. Ada Sereni sat in her retirement home in Jerusalem a month short of her 90th birthday, her legs covered by a blanket, her eyes half shut as she strained to recall events half a lifetime ago. As the image of the sunken *Lino* surfaced through the mists, her eyes opened wide with the sparkle of youth.

"That was an operation," she says, the words spaced for emphasis.

It had begun with a phone call from Geneva in late March 1948 to Ada in Rome. For a year, she had been in command of the Italian sector of Aliya Bet, the organization running the British blockade of Palestine with ships carrying Holocaust survivors. A small Italian vessel named *Lino*, said the caller, was about to sail from the northern Adriatic port of Trieste for Beirut. Aboard were 6,000 Czech rifles and 8 million rounds of ammunition destined for the Syrian Army.

"Do everything you can to stop it."

"Stop it?" echoed Ada.

"Yes, and if you can, sink it."

With the British scheduled to depart Palestine in seven weeks, war with the Arab states was certain. Already heavily outgunned, the Hagana command wanted urgently to stop this quantity of weapons and ammunition from being added to the odds against it.

Ada succeeded in stopping the *Lino* although credit for the operation went to the Palmah frogmen who attached a mine to its hull. This month a grateful nation finally paid tribute to Ada Sereni by awarding her the Israel Prize — not for the *Lino* operation but for her extraordinary life as an assimilated Italian Jewish princess turned kibbutz pioneer turned secret agent.

Her father, a prosperous merchant, was a member of the Ascarelli family, which traced its origins in Italy to Jews expelled from Spain in 1492. Ada grew up first in a beautiful apartment in the center of Rome with wall murals and maids and later in a villa. They had a horse-drawn carriage until they became one of the first families in Rome to acquire an automobile.

The family was strictly secular. Neither the Sabbath nor Jewish holidays were observed. Ada's father read her tales from the Bible but he presented it to her as history.

Enzo Sereni was born in the same year as Ada, 1905, and into the same social circle. They were in fact distant cousins. His family traced its origins to the Judean prisoners brought to Rome in 70 CE. The Serenis were more traditional than the Ascarellis. In high school, Ada and Enzo were in the same class. It became clear even before they graduated that they would

in Rehovot. "The owner of the orchard said to Enzo: 'You're a doctor of philosophy. Why do you want this work?'"

After a year, the group was assigned a tract south of Rehovot where they established Kibbutz Givat Brenner, destined to become the largest in the country. Enzo's personality made him a natural leader and he was chosen kibbutz secretary.

"We lived in a tent," recalls Ada. "I really liked living in a tent. In Rome I had experienced a bad earthquake and was terrified by the memory of the walls of our house shaking. I felt safer under canvas. In the summer when it was hot, we just rolled up the sides."

Ada felt so comfortable in the tent that when the first permanent structures were built at Givat Brenner she persuaded Enzo to let others move in first. They remained in a tent for five years.

In 1931 the couple was sent by the Jewish Agency for three years to Germany where Enzo served as an emissary recruiting young pioneers. They later spent time in the US. With the outbreak of World War II, Enzo joined the British army. In 1944, he joined the Palestinian Jewish parachutists dropped into Nazi-occupied Europe as agents for both the British and the Jewish Agency. Enzo was to be parachuted into northern Italy.

"I was against the paratroop operation," says Ada. "I didn't see opportunities that were worth the risk."

Nevertheless, Enzo, then 39, departed on the mission. A mistake in the plane's navigation caused him to be dropped into the German lines. There was a report that he had been taken to Dachau but his fate was not known for certain.

With the end of the war, Ada was asked to join the Aliya Bet operation in Italy. The organization had begun to operate all through Europe, making contact with the remnants of Europe's Jews and leading them westward to DP camps in the American-occupied zone or to the Mediterranean coast. Italy was to become a major embarkation point for the clandestine migrants.

For Ada, a major reason for accepting the post, despite the three children she left behind in Givat Brenner, was the chance to make inquiries about Enzo's fate. He was such a distinctive personality, she felt, that concentration-camp survivors who had seen him would remember him.

On July 7, 1945, Ada disembarked from a British plane in Naples together with three other Palestinian Jewish women in uniform. They had come as members of the Soldiers' Welfare Fund to run the recreational clubs serving the Jewish Brigade units attached to the British Army in Italy.

That evening, at the hotel where they were put up for the night, Ada was summoned to the lobby.

"Alon is waiting outside," said a soldier.

Arazi's borrowed army uniform and army jeep were matched by false papers. He drove to the unit dealing with the brigade service clubs and arranged with the officer in charge, an old friend, to have Ada assigned to Milan.

It was now nearly midnight. Before returning Ada to her hotel, Arazi took her aside to brief her on their mission. It was now estimated, he said in a hoarse voice, that a third of the Jewish people had been wiped out in the Nazi extermination camps — six million people. Perhaps a million had survived the Holocaust. Tens of thousands were pouring into displaced-persons camps in Austria and Germany. Members of the Jewish Brigade had begun transferring DPs to holding camps in Italy in army trucks in the expectation that ships would become available to carry them to Palestine.

The brigade was ideally deployed for such a mission, with bases the length of Italy. The units were mainly transportation and engineering commands with ample access to trucks and fuel. The refugees would be hidden under tarpaulin. As long as the drivers had legal travel orders, the military police would not search the vehicles.

There were in effect two levels of command in the brigade units; the senior officers executed the duties required of the unit by the British Army, but the sergeants were Hagana representatives in command of Aliya Bet operations. The acquisition of ships had begun. In Bari, near the southern tip of Italy, a 35-ton fishing boat that could carry 35 people had been purchased. It was necessary, said Arazi, to begin buying larger ships and on a large scale.

On the way north to Milan, Ada and Arazi stopped off in Rome where she took a few hours to visit her family, whose members had survived the war unharmed. They had not seen each other in eight years. Arazi made another stop in Genoa to negotiate the purchase of a 170-ton vessel.

During the next two years Ada, the only native Italian speaker on Arazi's small command team, would play an increasingly important role. She admired Arazi's boldness, his ability to make hard decisions quickly and to operate in the tightest of spaces.

They had to stay one step ahead of the Italian security forces and of the British agents who were trying to cut off the flow of illegal immigration to Palestine at the source. It was a heady game which involved the purchase of vessels, their provisioning, the selection of secluded ports or open stretches of beach from which the ships would take aboard their passengers and the surreptitious movement of the refugees to the embarkation points at night.

Bunks had to be built aboard the vessels to accommodate hundreds, and eventually thousands, of passengers. There were various guardians of the law who had to be persuaded or fast-talked or outflanked,

and warned that the refugees would set fire to the vessel and go down with it if there was an attempt to remove them forcibly.

Exploiting the presence of the press, he orchestrated international support and finally won British agreement to let the refugees sail for Palestine, albeit at the expense of the monthly allotment of certificates permitting Jews entry.

Despite their moral victory, the Aliya Bet team could feel the net closing about them. At this point Ada suggested a major change in strategy. Unlike the British, she pointed out, the Italians sympathized with the Jewish refugees. They understood too that if the refugees did not move on they might end up staying in Italy. There was also a distaste among Italian officials for taking orders from the British who were an occupying power.

Ada suggested that she go to Rome and attempt to win the support of Italian officials for the Aliya Bet operation. "The worst that can happen is that they'll put me in jail for a while," she said.

Arazi mulled over her proposal for some minutes. "Do you really think this can work?" he asked.

"Yes, I do," she replied. He gave her his blessings.

The next morning, a car and driver were waiting for her. Ada herself did not drive. The trip to Rome took 17 hours during which she worked through her approach. She had by now learned enough about the workings of bureaucracy to recognize that the supreme commandment of all functionaries was to protect their backsides. Bureaucrats would not endanger their careers and livelihoods. Logic, then, demanded that she begin at the top.

As they approached Rome, the car passed an area where she had spent summer holidays with her family as a child. "When I grew up women moved from the guardianship of their parents and brothers to that of their husbands," she would write as she recalled that trip. "Now I was in an underground organization, among military men dealing with the escape of the remnants of a people to which I did not even know I belonged when I was a child."

In Rome, Ada called on an admiral who headed a department which had been causing difficulties for Aliya Bet. The admiral agreed to see her, presuming her to be the widow or mother of a sailor lost in the war.

"Yes, madam, tell me how I can help you," he began.

"My name is Ada Sereni and I work for the underground organization dealing with the emigration of Jewish refugees from Italy."

The admiral, who had expected to hear a plea for an increased survivor's pension, was astounded at this blatant admission that she was engaged in illegal activities.

"And you've come to me to tell me this?"

"I've come to you because we very much

need your help."

It was several moments before his face unfroze.

"Well, what is it you would like me to do for you?"

Ada left with an understanding that he would be helpful.

Encouraged by her success, Ada decided to aim higher still. She telephoned Pietro Nenni, the Italian foreign minister, an old socialist acquaintance of the Sereni family. When she requested a meeting, the foreign minister asked what she wished to



Ada Sereni: The art of friendly persuasion served her well in her clandestine Aliya Bet operations.

discuss. "The illegal immigration of Jews to Palestine," she said. Nenni was not taken aback. He would meet with her but not at the Foreign Ministry, which was too sensitive a venue for such a conversation. Instead, they met at the Interior Ministry together with the interior minister himself.

Ada presented her case to the two ministers as a simple equation. "You have an interest in seeing that the Jewish refugees in Italy leave the country. We have an interest in seeing them leave the country too. Let us work together."

The ministers agreed immediately. They

would assist but it would have to be in ways discreet enough not to be perceived by the British. What specifically did Ada want? To be introduced, she said, to four officials — the country's top police officer, the commander of the navy, the supervisor of ports and the head of counter-intelligence.

Within the next few days, Ada met with all four officials and found them sympathetic, particularly the police inspector-general. The Jewish people, he said, had a right to their own homeland and the European nations had an obligation to help them. The naval and port commanders had

a particular grievance against the British for having mauled the Italian fleet during the war and impounded what was left of it afterwards.

Certain ground rules were worked out to ensure discretion. There would be no changes made to the exteriors of the Aliya Bet ships that would make them distinguishable to prying eyes. There would be no boarding of refugees in ports where they would clearly be noticed.

The fact that Ada was a woman moving in a world of men was figured into the ground rules too. It was thought best that

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She found a Dachau survivor who said he had seen Enzo there once from a distance. A priest who returned from Dachau reported that the camp's records were preserved in Munich. At Ada's request an officer from the Jewish Brigade went through the files. He brought her a report dated November 18, 1944, recording the death of Enzo and other Italian prisoners by firing squad.



The British found out about it and pressured the Italian government into preventing the boarding of refugees. The ship sailed instead to Marseilles. Another ves-

For the most part, however, the British failed to impede Aliya Bet's work in Italy. Periodically, Ada would get a telephone call from one of her "friendly four," the director of ports, who would simply read out a list of names. These were names supplied by the British of ships they suspected of being used by Aliya Bet. After every name, Ada would say "yes," indicating that it was one of her ships, or "no." The lists usually had 20 or more names and Ada never had occasion to say "yes" to

In September 1947, the first attempt was made to clandestinely airlift refugees from Italy to Palestine. A twin-engine plane piloted by two American pilots was to land on an abandoned wartime airstrip near Salerno at night and pick up 50 refugee children. A doctor was to stay with the youths until they boarded the plane and then make his way to a nearby road where Ada and her driver would be waiting. The

The next day Ada and Hod were transferred to a jail in the next town. The chief jailer greeted Ada at the entrance with a deep bow. "Signora, I've received strict instructions to treat you well. But if they wanted to treat you well they shouldn't have sent you here in the first place."

It was clear to Ada that the investigation would show that the arms shipment was legal. It was therefore necessary to move with all possible speed.

'Enzo was a Zionist. He laid down one condition – that we live in Palestine as pioneers.'

Days returned to the office of the inspector-general. In her presence he telephoned the police commander in Bari. "As far as I'm concerned," he told the Bari commander, "the *Lino* can sail if all its permits are in order. Check that they are." Among the papers needed, he pointed out, was the special permit for carrying armaments.

"Have you heard what happened?" he asked. The *Lino* had been sunk. There were no casualties and no damage to the dock.

Her relations with the politically powerful Shaul Avigur, the secretive head of Aliyah Bet, had soured because of their differing temperaments and different operational styles. Unlike Arzi, for instance, Avigur had never asked to meet Ada's Italian contacts. She suspected that it was because Avigur was uncomfortable about such meetings, being more accustomed to winning help by bribery than by persuasion.

When, unbeknownst to her, he came to Genon and purchased a ship, he neglected to take certain precautions and the operation was blown. This became a subject of rancor between her and Avigur. A veteran Mapai official speculated this month that Ada may have evoked party disfavor as early as the 1930s by challenging the politically correct belief that a Revisionist Avraham Stavsky, had murdered Zionist leader Haim Arlossoff.

leader Hium Anisroff. Ada, who had come to know the intimate workings of the Italian political mind, knew enough about politics now to realize that her own path in public service was probably blocked. An appointment to an ambassadorial post which her friends had expected did not come and her exceptional performance in Aliya Bet would be little noted.

She returned to the kibbutz but it was not long before she was asked by Yehuda Arazzi to team up with him once again. He had built the Ramat Aviv Hotel in Tel Aviv and wanted Ada to help him run it. She would remain there for several years. In the 1950s, she returned to Italy, this time as part of a discrete government team maintaining contacts with Soviet Jewry from various European capitals.

Ada suffered another personal tragedy in 1954 when her only son was among those killed on the shores of Lake Kinneret when a plane performing acrobatics crashed into a crowd of spectators.

Today, she is physically frail. But the charm is still there and the sense of humor and the clear view of the way life is played. The Italianate passions are there, too. She enthuses still about many of those she walked with and there are those who had best still keep out of her way. She has not been certain that she would be strong enough to attend the Israel Prize ceremony but in the end she did, seated in a wheelchair. It gave her pleasure but it would have given her more pleasure, she said afterwards, had it come 20 years earlier.

In addition to her two daughters, Ada has five grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild. This fifth generation offspring resides at Giovanni Brenner where Ada and Enzo, scions of the Ascarelli and Sereni families, had 6 years ago founded their own branch of their venerable lines in a pioneer tent.

The vessel had gone down in shallow waters. Within a month Ada learned from her counter-espionage contact that a Syrian major had arrived to salvage the weapons and ammunition, still serviceable despite their immersion.

Ada convened her team. This time they would attempt not just to stop the armaments from getting to Syria but to get them to the newly declared Jewish state fighting for its life. For the first and only time in her clandestine career Ada resorted to the payment of bribes. A Bari shipping agent had been asked by the Syrian to acquire a vessel and crew for the reshipment of the *Lino's* cargo. The agent had in the past betrayed an Aliya Bet ship for money so Ada was sure he would betray the Syrian for money as well. She bought the agent's cooperation for \$15,000.

Rejecting a proposal that all the crewmen hired by the Syrian be bribed to take the boat to Israel, Ada said that too many people in on the plot would endanger its secrecy. It was sufficient, she said, to recruit the chief engineer and the second-in-command.

"If the captain himself were involved, he would be too vulnerable afterwards," says Ada. "I didn't want to 'burn' him. In all my activities in Italy, I was careful never to burn anyone." Once these preliminaries

The Lino incident a month before the establishment of Israel was one of the last to occupy Ada before Aliya Bet closed shop in Italy. Upon receiving the order to intercept the vessel, she summoned a meeting of her senior staff. Suggestions ranged from dropping bombs from a small Piper—they would have to make homemade bombs first—to indulging in an old-fashioned bit of piracy by boarding the vessel at sea. The best alternative seemed the Piper.

Ada was unhappy with that option. If the bombs actually hit the ship it would mean the loss of Italian lives. Apart from humanitarian considerations this could have serious political implications. She could not object to the operation, however, unless she could offer a better solution.

Three days after being alerted to the *Lino's* imminent sailing, Ada received a call from Avigur. "The *Lino* sailed this morning," was all he said before hanging up.

As she reran the options in her mind, a new train of thought struck her. The captain she hired on Aliya Bet business had not infrequently made unplanned stopovers in ports for personal reasons. The *Lino's*

could not do the job within 24 hours the Italians would be called in. "I will not let that ship sail just because you don't want us to use mercenaries."

Her firmness helped Dror and his comrades to focus their minds. Within a few hours they were back at Ada's headquarters to report that they had the materials needed. They had gone to all the drugstores in Rome to buy the necessary chemicals in small quantities so as not to arouse suspicion. They had

suspicion. They now had enough to make two mines. They would need at least 48 hours, however, to get to the port, make the mines, plan the operation and execute it. It was, Ada conceded, a reasonable request. It would be up to her to buy them the time.

The police inspector-general agreed immediately to her request for a meeting. She knew, she said, that the sailing of the *Lino* could not be prevented. It was important, however, that it be delayed by a few days.

"What I don't understand," he finally said, "is why you just don't sink it."

The *Lino* had been towed to Bari and it was to there that four Palmah frogmen drove. That night Dror and another man slipped into the cold water of Bari harbor and swam toward the *Lino*. To their bitter surprise they found a British destroyer anchored immediately alongside the vessel, and illuminating the water with searchlights.

The phone awakened Ada at 4:30 a.m. It was Dror reporting that the mission had been aborted. She told him to be prepared to try again that night.

Confronting the navy commander a few hours later she asked why Italy had permitted a British warship to enter an Italian port in order to mount guard on an Italian vessel. Italy now had a peace agreement with Great Britain and was no longer an occupied country. The admiral said that

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Motl Hod was barely 20 when he gave evidence of his mettle by volunteering to serve as a driver for Ada Sereni. The Deganya lad, who had come to Italy with the Jewish Brigade, had stayed behind to work with Aliya Bet when the brigade was sent home. Along with scores of other brigade troopers, he had swapped his identity with a refugee who gained entry to Palestine with the papers of a returning soldier. Hod took on the refugee's identity.

Ada had requested an Italian driver when she took over from Yehuda Arzi because the brigade soldiers drove too fast and argued with her when she protested. However, the heads of Aliya Bet did not want an outsider privy to Ada's goings and comings and overhearing the conversations she had with persons traveling with her.

When volunteers were sought among those in the brigade who stayed behind, Hod stepped forward. He would not only have to restrain himself from speedy driving, he knew, but endure almost total silence during their long trips. Ada was notorious among the drivers for losing herself in thought and cutting off attempts at small talk.

"She wanted an Italian driver because she thought we were noisy, talked too much and were impolite," says Hod. He himself, he notes, was at least as brash and talkative and impolite as the other Palestinian soldiers; but he decided to show her that it could be otherwise.

I set a rule for myself that I would not talk to her unless she talked to me. She sat in the back and I didn't speak a word. We were on the road day and night. I kept the car clean and had jerry cans filled with gas and was always ready. It took a few weeks before she finally broke and spoke to me. She asked whether I'd mind if she sat up front sometimes. Our relations became friendly, but I still waited for her to initiate conversations.

"I came to greatly appreciate her. She understood the Italians. Inside out and knew exactly how to behave with them." If she had an appointment with a dignitary, Hod would often drive her to a beauty parlor and wait until she had her hair done.

Ada had declined to use the large black Rolls Royce that Yehuda Arazi had somehow acquired. Instead Hod drove a modest Citroën.

IT WAS indirectly thanks to Aza and the experience at the Salerno airstrip that Hod - who would command Israel's spectacular air victories in 1967 - became interested in flying. He had watched as the plane came from nowhere in the darkness, scooped up the waiting refugee children and disappeared into the sky.

When he and Ada were arrested, Hod was placed in a cell with five thieves. He spoke Italian well enough by now to converse with them. "We talked about whatever prisoners talk about. It was very interesting." During the three days of incarceration, he had ample time to mull over what he had seen at the airstrip. "I said to myself, 'Well, flying is interesting if it can do such things.'"

When they returned to Rome, he asked Ada whether she could get authorization for him to study flying at a civilian airfield. This, he suggested, might be a way to train pilots for the air force that Israel would be needing. Ada sent a message to Tel Aviv and got a positive response. By the summer of 1948, a dozen young Israelis were studying flying in Italy as a direct result of Hachosrov's initiative. Later that year, the group shifted its training to Czochdowlowski from which many of them went on to become pilots in the Israeli Air Force.

from which, within a few months, Hod flew a Spitfire home. "Ada was in Rome in the 1950s when Hod, by now an up-and-coming Air Force officer, visited Italy with his wife. Ada invited them on a tour of the city. This time, she said, Hod would sit in the back. She had finally acquired a license and she would drive.

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MARKS & SPENCER

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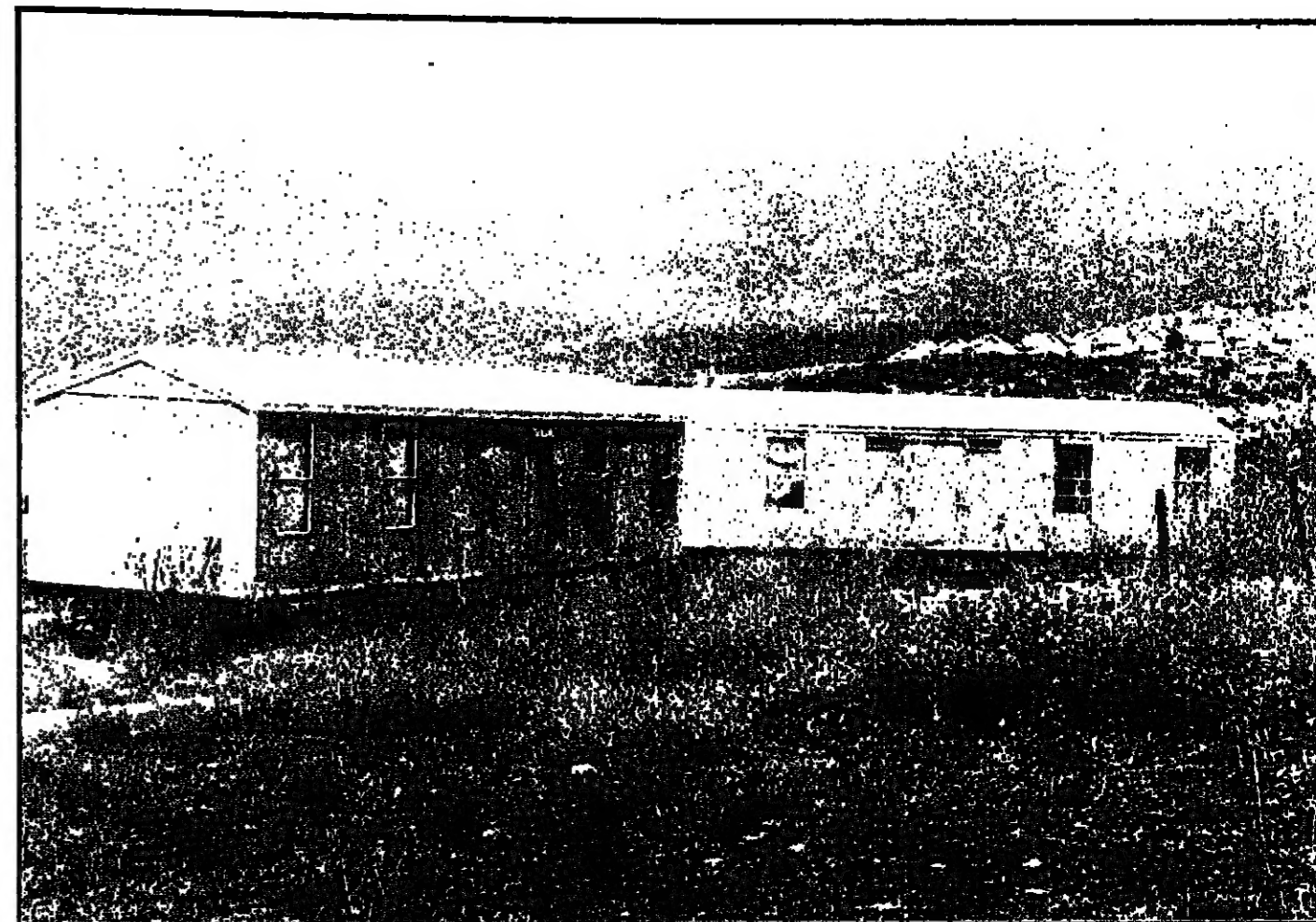
Anyone who believes the pioneering spirit is dead among young Israelis should take a look at Inbar Iruah Kafri (Inbar Country Guest House). Perched high up on a verdant Galilee ridge, an eight-minute drive southwest of Nahal Amud junction, Inbar is home to 12 idealists who pooled their money a year ago to build their own kibbutz and guest house. They built it the old-fashioned way — with the sweat of their labor; and paid for it the modern way — with a private loan.

Inbar Country Guest House is unique among kibbutzim in two ways. First, its economy is based entirely on income from its guest house and related tourist services. Second, it has no affiliation with any kibbutz movement.

"We decided we want to make our own decisions, without anyone from above in the movement telling us what to do," explains member Ariel Sa'ar, 31, from Kibbutz Sa'ar. "It's a risk, but it's worth it."

In 1988, Sa'ar joined a Hashomer Hatza'ir *garin* (kibbutz settlement group) of 25 young ex-kibbutzniks. The *garin* attracted several families, and was set to move to a settlement site chosen by the Artzi movement. Two weeks before the planned move, the Nahal group already at the site decided to stay. It was a tremendous blow, Sa'ar says.

The families in the *garin* struck out on their own, while the younger members spent the next eight years moving from



SUE FISHKOFF

Kibbutz members live in these modest quarters and devote all of their resources to building the guest facilities.

HOME OF THEIR OWN

kibbutz to kibbutz, looking for a permanent site. The group, which adopted the name "Kvutza Hagalit," spent time on Kibbutz Tzivon, and several years on Kibbutz Ravid, near their present location, dreaming all the time of building their own home in Galilee.

Two years ago, the United Kibbutz Movement offered the *garin* an empty kibbutz site. "We were set to go, but decided against it," Sa'ar explains. "The movement wanted to be in charge, to tell us how fast to absorb new members, how big we should grow, what kind of industry we should have. We wanted to make our own decisions."

In breaking away from the kibbutz organizations, the *garin* cut off its source of financial support. The group stayed another year at Ravid, putting in a full day's work on the kibbutz every morning, then working second jobs in the afternoons and evenings in Haifa to save money to move to their own settlement. By the spring of 1994, five remaining members of the original '88 *garin*, now in their late 20s and early 30s, were joined by five other young people, and a couple in their 50s.

On Independence Day last year, bolstered with loans from a bank and from the government-supported Small Business Fund, the *garin* arrived at its new home.

"It was a disaster," Sa'ar recalls. The site had been used by the IDF as a transit camp for new Nahal settlements in the region, and had been abandoned two years earlier. "It was so bad, even the army didn't want it," he comments.

Sa'ar flips through an album of photographs taken during the first few days at the site. The pictures reveal a sad collection of broken-down, ramshackle buildings. There were no doors, few windows and gaping holes in most walls. Tree roots pushed up through the floor tiles. The shower stalls were destroyed, the sinks hung from their pipes, kitchen cabinets

A year ago, 12 young idealists pooled their funds to build their own, independent kibbutz in Galilee.

By Sue Fishkoff



were torn from the walls. Bed frames lay twisted in the yards, piled up next to filthy, torn mattresses. Nothing was salvageable.

"We looked at it and said, 'we're going to build our holiday village guest house here?'" Sa'ar recalls. "Everyone said we're crazy."

The *garin* began to rebuild the settlement from scratch. First, the old buildings had to be ripped down. Twenty-nine truckloads of garbage were carted out before they could move onto the site. They sunk every shekel they had into the project, including salaries saved from the Haifa jobs, army severance pay and the start-up money some of them received from their original kibbutzim.

They did all the construction themselves: pipe installation, electric wiring, roofing, tiling, cabinetwork; they put in kitchens, toilets and showers. Each member pitched in, combining previous experience with pluck and energy, learning as they went. They hired experts in tiling and sewage for a few days, to learn the ropes, and finished the jobs on their own.

Yoav did the installation. Tal lay the tiles, salvaging and cleaning as many of the old tiles as possible, to save money. Yaffa painted the walls. Shimi and Rotem did the electric wiring. "Everyone had 15 different jobs," Sa'ar says. "People have been very helpful. If I need to paint something, I call up Tambar and they tell me which paint to use and how to do it right."

All their efforts centered around building the guest house, which was to be the

Ariel Sa'ar and Orly Grossberg both left established kibbutzim to join Inbar.

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TAM ADV

YOUR WEEK JUST GOT BRIGHTER THE JERUSALEM POST

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(Right) Trainees are quick on the draw.

(Below) Aleksandr Kullkov, deputy interior minister of the Russian Federation, takes aim with a Jericho pistol.

READY, AIM, FIRE

Russian officials turn to Israeli security experts to help arrest the crime epidemic in the CIS.

By Steve Rodan
Photos: Ariel Jerozolinski



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Mikhail Iosif Shestopalov grips the Jericho 9-mm pistol in his right hand and takes aim at the target seven meters away. He strains to understand the orders of an instructor clad in black and squints to avoid the glare of the sun.

"Knees bent slightly. Keep your elbows straight," Alex Shaposhnik, the instructor, says. "Tight. Keep the gun tight in your grip. Now, fire."

Shestopalov finally gives up trying to pay attention and blasts away at his target with one hand, cowboy style, as an electronic detector registers the hits at the range just outside Kibbutz Sdot Yam near Caesarea. When he and his colleagues exhaust their round, Shaposhnik and his assistant check the pistols of each participant to ensure the cartridge and barrel are empty.

The visiting Russian sure could use the practice. As head of security at the Menatep Bank, Shestopalov is also a board member of one of the most important commercial institutions in the CIS. His main job is to ensure that his business is not used to launder drug money and to

keep funds safely in their deposits.

In short, Shestopalov and his firm need protection and the most natural address is — you guessed it — Israel. He and other Russians have been impressed by how Israel has fought terrorism, whether in the skies during the attempted airline hijackings of the late 1960s, or in the territories during the Palestinian uprising in the 1980s, and now believe Israel can help them fight sophisticated crime.

"An entire industry has been established because of our fight against terror," says Benny Michaelson, head of business intelligence at TAAS-Israel Industries (formerly Israel Military Industries). "We operate in perimeter protection of airports, harbors, special operations and riot control. It's something that we had to do."

These days, the criminals appear to be in control of much of the CIS. In 1993, crime rose in Moscow by 23 percent. The violent crime rate increased by 45 percent. During the first half of last year, the crime rate was more than double that of 1993.

In Moscow, officials still resist admitting the scope of the problem. "According to our principles, there is no mafia," says Aleksandr Kulikov, deputy interior minister of the Russian Federation. "There are murderers. There

are thieves. There are drug dealers. But the term 'mafia' implies a structure that we don't assess is there."

To foreign visitors, these nuances don't mean much. According to Russian officials, at least 2 percent of the crime is directed against tourists. While petty criminals attack unescorted foreigners in broad daylight, the organized crime concentrates on wholesale theft of goods transported on trucks and trains.

Whatever you call it, nobody denies that the sharp rise in crime is a reality of the post-Communist era.

"There has been a total revolution in Russia," says Ronny Avishai, a reserve colonel and security consultant. "It has turned from a communist country to an open country. There are many criminals and other obstacles to businessmen who want to be active there."

The result is that large foreign corporations often spend huge amounts of money merely protecting their executives and property. Smaller companies, however, have decided that the lure of a country where labor and raw materials are cheap is not worth the dangers of life in the CIS.

"It's cheap for the investors," says Mordecai Sinai, a security consultant who deals with the Russians. "But there are cheaters everywhere. You go in there but you see the risks are so high that you leave."

Sinai, Avishai and their colleagues have a lot riding on their hopes in eastern Europe. As director-general of the Herzliya-based International Security Academy, Avishai, promoted to colonel at age 31, established a branch in Latvia, regarded as the most Western republic of the former Soviet Union. The academy trains bodyguards and other private security personnel throughout Europe in the latest Israeli techniques. The instructors are former commandos in the army and police as well as agents in the General Security Services.

The academy also has a sister company called International Security Services. The firm provides bodyguards, security of facilities, office services and business intelligence in several capitals in the former Soviet Union, Europe and North America.

ISS is not alone. Industry analysts say Israeli companies are examining how lucrative the security niche is in eastern Europe. International trade shows are now the norm in the CIS. In March, an exhibition in Moscow on security and fire safety was sold out. Similar shows are planned around the other republics over the next year.

But interest doesn't always mean business. During the last three years Israeli defense firms, which are estimated to have exported about \$1.5 billion in products and services in 1994, have been burned when trying to sell military equipment to countries such as Poland and CIS republics, which offered barter rather than cash.

Defense industry cooperation has also fallen short of expectations. The joint project by Russia and Israel Aircraft Industries to produce the Galaxy executive jet, industry sources say, is way behind schedule because of the technological gap between Moscow-trained and Tel Aviv-trained engineers.

Ze'ev Bonen, a former director-general at Rafael (the Armaments Development Authority), and now a researcher at Bar-Ilan University's BESA Center for Strategic Studies, says he's not sure whether local companies marketing personal security will once again be disappointed. "You're not dealing with governments but with private firms in Russia," Bonen says. "You have no guarantees that you're not dealing with fly-by-night outfits."

Avishai, of the ISS, and his colleagues say the opposite. Russian companies are being privatized and must make a profit. Foreign businesses looking to enter the east European market need protection quickly. As a result, the new security



Security instructors play the part to the fullest.

industry, they say, can expect immediate interest in their services, although time is needed to gain credibility.

David Mirza, the 40-year-old founder of the academy, says the company has that credibility. First, many struggling firms that would ply their wares anywhere have been largely weeded out — either through financial hardships or strict Defense Ministry regulations on export of military hardware or expertise. The regulations

came in the wake of the 1989 Yair Klein scandal, in which a reserve colonel was training people believed to be drug dealers in Colombia.

Israeli instructors at the academy, which has been in Riga since 1992, train recruits sent by European firms to become bodyguards. A three-week course costs \$3,500, less than half of what is charged in some parts of Western Europe.

Marketing consultants bring Israeli tech-

nology to help secure installations or prevent white-collar crime. The academy exports light arms, including Uzis, bullet-proof vests and other accessories to the former Soviet Union. Prices are kept relatively low to attract more business.

"Israel is an attractive country in the security realm," Mirza says. "They look at us differently."

Mirza refuses to list his company's finances. He will only say he does well in the CIS. "If you show people how well you're doing, then you're a marked man," says Mirza, a large man with a smile.

On the shooting range, Mirza's instructors take over. Like his boss, Oren Shem Tov, chief of the academy's Europe department, is a burly man. He demonstrates the use of what he calls "selective fire."

At the next range, in the shadow of a sand dune, are several government security agents deep in target practice. They are carrying targets with a picture of Michael Jackson in sunglasses.

"No one teaches how to kill," says Shem Tov, a former government agent. "We teach how to stop the attacker. If he is killed, well, that's his problem."

Shem Tov smiles.

"You have to be 100 percent sure before you shoot," he continues. "It's not like the movies where he aims for his hand. Ninety percent of the time, you miss his hand and hit someone else."

"There's no shooting from the hip. That's also just from the movies. In the army, you can shoot while you move. In our work, you shoot while you're stationary."

The visitors begin to practice. Shaposhnik and Mirza demonstrate toughness. They slap stomachs and shove the shooters from behind to remind them to maintain a firm stance.

The instructors move on. The current lesson is on operational driving. You're driving quickly and 200 meters away is a man firing a gun in your direction; or a mob hungry for blood. The mission is to get out fast.

Shem-Tov is at the wheel of a white rented car with automatic transmission. He steps hard on the gas and drives the car to about 60 km an hour. In front of him is Shaposhnik firing a special gun with balls that splat red paint.



Target practice at the International Security Academy.

THE KGB CRIME-BUSTERS

The end of the Cold War has meant a major turn in the career of Ivan Zakharovich Yurkin. Yurkin's boss is still the KGB. But his duties now involve fighting crime rather than dissidents.

"I am responsible for the special unit in the fight against organized crime," says Yurkin, deputy KGB chairman of the Belarus republic. "Our president has put the issue of fighting criminals as his main priority."

Yurkin's job is also protecting the republic's sensitive industries. He arrived here with a delegation from Belxport, which represents the defense industries of Belarus.

Yurkin says he has two goals to accomplish during his visit here: One is to forge cooperation with Israelis and other international bodies in fighting crime. The other is demonstrate that the KGB is not what it used to be in the Kremlin was in charge.

"About two years ago, it would have been impossible to imagine that our officials would come to Israel in such an open way and even give an interview," he says.

Yurkin feels at home in Israeli security circles. He handles the Uzi like a charm. At the firing range, he hits one bull's-eye after another.

But his new challenge will require far more than good aim. Crime is rampant in Belarus, as it is in the rest of the former Soviet Union. Much of it is sophisticated, such as money-laundering by drug dealers or hijacking sensitive material. "People are taking capital away from our country," he says.

"These are kinds of crime of which we have no experience whatsoever."

Corruption and speculation is another problem, the latter being legal in the West, but banned in the East where resources remain limited and accessible to the privileged few.

"In order to encourage investment, things must be set right," he adds.

Belarus has bilateral accords with the Russian Federation and several other republics. With eastern European countries, he says, there are "gentleman's agreements. We would like to put this cooperation on a formal basis."

Yurkin feels he can learn from the Israelis. He points to the hundreds of thousands of new immigrants who have arrived from the former Soviet Union over the past five years.

"Israel is a rather young state," he says. "We want to see how things are organized here."

The deputy KGB chief does not fear a backlash from the average citizen after 70 years of communism. Indeed, he says, the KGB still commands respect where other institutions have lost credibility.

"You know that the KGB is a special security service which is also responsible for national security," he says. "But in my country, many people feel that only the KGB can solve the criminal problem."

"We are one of the stable republics in the CIS," he adds. "But I can't say we have the situation under control."

- S.R.



Ivan Zakharovich Yurkin of the KGB (above) and academy founder David Mirza (below) sport Uzi pistols.



The effect is immediate. The back wheels lock and throw the car into a 180-degree turn. Shem-Tov lowers the brakes, steps on the gas and he's gone.

Nearby, Dave Bolimowitz takes a break. He is responsible for security training for the Baltic states at Mirza's academy and reflects on the Middle East peace process. Like the other trainers, he is under 30, dressed in a black jumpsuit and wrap-around sunglasses. In his opinion, peace is not exactly good for business.

"This agreement with the PLO leaves me with nothing to do," he says. "I used to be in the border police, but I left. In fact, the whole trend around the world of peace really puts the pressure on me. Soon, we won't have any work."

Not if Mirza can help it. His company operates on the principle that security is a must for the professional and an enjoyment for the adventurous. One of his projects is to introduce a tour of Israel that will include courses in hand-to-hand combat, target practice, operational driving and perhaps bomb dismantlement.

The training would go well with other activities for the hyperactive tourist, such as rappelling or desert survival. Avishai, the director-general, says the tours will start in September. Kibbutz Sdot Yam will provide the food and lodging and some scenic tours. The academy will do the rest.

"There are a whole bunch of crazy people who spend their time and money climbing Mount Everest," he says. "So, why not bring them here as well?"

Avishai dismisses the possibility that the academy will be flooded by neo-Nazis and mercenaries. The professional courses, he says, are open to those with approval by the police in their countries and have a medical certificate.

"We don't want to train the mafia," he says.

The tourists won't need police approval; the week of training will be so flimsy that it will have little value other than providing them with lots of fun. Instructors say a weapons training course of any value needs a minimum of two weeks in which at least 600 bullets are fired.

The instructors warn that nobody is coddled. At a demonstration for journalists, Bolimowitz slaps the hanging bellies of the male members of the Fourth Estate and taints the women correspondents. The encounter is recorded by a video crew led by Channel 1's Hanan Azran, who is listed as a research colleague at the academy.

"Don't draw until I say 'Draw,'" Bolimowitz barks.

"Draw..." Several alert journalists pull out their pistols.

"I didn't say 'Draw,' did I?" Bolimowitz shouts.

Finally, an American woman journalist has had enough. "You're a chauvinist," she says.

Bolimowitz seems taken aback. "It's a chauvinist?" he asks. "You're just being treated like everybody else."

Mirza asks for a volunteer to ascend the stage in the lecture room at a seminar he is sponsoring in Herzliya. "Anybody, anybody," he says.

Kulikov, the thin Russian deputy interior minister, responds. Mirza, a burly man in jeans and work shirt whose career has been in the Border Police, places the volunteer behind him in a demonstration of the Israeli technique of bodyguarding.

First, there is a film of an assassination attempt on a French politician. His bodyguards pull him down on the street and huddle around him.

"That's not the Israeli way. 'Everybody is so busy protecting him that hardly anybody is fighting off the attacker,'" Mirza says. "A bodyguard has to fight. That's what you have to train him to do. He's not going to want to stand around waiting for a bullet, whether you pay him \$200 or \$25,000. You want his barrel to go forward while you get the client out of danger."

At that point, Mirza pulls Kulikov down with one hand as the Israeli blocks his body. With the other hand, Mirza fires an imaginary gun as he slowly backs away.

Any questions? Aleksandr Tsiganov, head of security at AO Komelch, a gas company, rises.

"I would like to know about the psychological aspect," Tsiganov asks. "How much compatibility is necessary between the bodyguard and one he is protecting?"

Mirza smiles. He's been trying to provoke a serious discussion most of the day. "Sometimes there is no chemistry," he says. "Sometimes you can't stand the wit of the client and wish she'd get a bullet in the head."

"Take Arik Sharon," Mirza continues, referring to the Likud Knesset member and former defense minister. "All the bodyguards love to work with Arik. His wife, Lily, would always offer them food and drink. There was always action with Arik. He wouldn't tell you where he was going and he would walk around the Old City causing provocations."

"You ever see Yasser Arafat?" Mirza asks in Hebrew as the interpreter struggles to keep up with him. "He has 10 guys in front of him and 20 around and they push people. It's not security. It's chaos. It's like a singer who wants his fans to claw him so that he feels he's still popular."

The delegates laugh.

"I'm not trying to put down Arafat," Mirza adds. "He's our partner and I respect him."

The laughter grows louder.

The translators are sweating. Mirza's rapid speaking is making their job hard enough. But how do they translate Mirza's hand movements?

For example, how does a translator interpret Mirza when he slaps his open left hand across a rising right hand clenched into a fist - a curse in Italian?

Sometimes, the Russians don't appear amused. A lecture by Michaelson from TAAAS included a demonstration video on Israel's Merkava tank. Michaelson, a reserve colonel, recounted the Merkava's success against Syria's line of Soviet-made armor, including the T-55, T-62 and T-72.

It seemed a bit much for Anatoli Netkachev, deputy head of security at Souzcontract, Russia's largest importer of food from the West. "How do you compare Russia's new T-90 tank and the Merkava?" he asks.

Michaelson chose his words carefully. Demonstrating Israeli prowess is one thing. Insulting a potential customer is quite another.

"Tank-building in Russia and in Israel are totally different concepts," he says. "The T-90 is the result of the concept of the Russian way of thinking, which I respect very much. But it's different."

Can I tell you what's really bothering me?" asks Moshe Shamir, in a courteous but firm voice. An hour had gone by as he discussed miscellaneous - and to him secondary - civic topics: Why are members of Israeli academe post-Zionist intellectual snobs? Why won't Yitzhak Rabin ever say hello to him again? Why did President Ezer Weizman call the distinguished assembly of writers gathered at the recent Hebrew Writers' Association old fogies?

His battleship-gray eyes practically pleaded: Can't we get to the main point, to the single maddening political issue which has fomented all those angry *Ma'ariv* op-ed articles of his?

Like so many in public life, Shamir sees life through both a magnifying glass and a picture window. For Shamir, who grew up in the iron lap of the left-wing Mapam and went on to spend the better part of his life on the sharp edge of right-wing politics, his window does not have a planter full of roses.

To give an indication of the political hoops Shamir has jumped, he is the sort of right-wing ideologue who to this day fully believes that Menachem Begin "betrayed his party and his country in returning Sinai to the Egyptians."

"The debate," says Shamir suddenly lurching forward in an armchair in his Tel Aviv living room, "is whether Israel is marching toward peaceful resolution of its conflicts with the surrounding Arab states and the Arabs within its borders, or is Israel heading for catastrophe?"

Shamir is an Israeli version of the well-spoken American writer and right-wing pundit, William F. Buckley, except with none of Buckley's drollery. A best-selling novelist and respected man of letters, he was awarded the Israel Prize for Literature in 1988. He was also a Knesset member from 1978 to 1981 in the Tehiya faction, and writes a pungent *Ma'ariv* column.



American government and, with all due respect, the Americans' position hasn't changed since 1948. Bottom line, in their eyes, Jerusalem is not the capital; the Palestinian refugees must be returned. It's all written down there in the disastrous [UN Security Council] Resolution 242 which Menachem Begin upheld.

"The Americans are in no way willing to ignore 200 million Moslems, who to the Americans mean oil, markets, influence in the region and in Europe. Haven't the Americans been pestering us for 27 years to return the territories? Instead we should have settled 500,000 Jews there."

Shamir pauses momentarily in bitter silence.

"Begin, Begin," he muses quixotically. "And what good did Menachem Begin do? Honestly? I stood there in 1977 on a ridge in Samaria, and Begin sent the army out to chase us away. Begin gave back Sinai which is a travesty generations of Israelis will pay for. A fiasco. The root of all evil."

That Shamir, the eminent writer, has emerged as an eloquent mouthpiece for right-wing ideology explains the often blunt tenor of his arguments. Shamir has come by the role honestly. First, he seems to be beyond trivial intrigue, free of literary affectation and whims. As a Zionist, writer and politician, he has long been the proud vessel of nationalistic values.

Second, his ardent views are a rebuke to the left-wing sentiment widespread in the country's literary community. Moreover, his stature as the author of 50 books - 12 novels, five short story collections, 12 books of essays, five biographies, one volume of poetry and 15 plays - including some of the Hebrew-language's literary masterpieces and best-sellers of the 1950s and 1960s, preclude his critics from dismissing him. His frequent outbursts are offset by his literary track record.

And finally there's a subtle difference between himself and other authors who are vocal on the big issues. He's not an author turned political ventriloquist. Rather

GUARD OUR TONGUE

Moshe Shamir wrestled with politics and, unlike many leading authors, emerged as a powerful, passionate advocate of the nationalist cause.

By Netty C. Gross

Anybody listening to him cannot have a moment's uncertainty about who the man behind the voice is. You may have heard it over and over again, but each time Shamir's political criticism is aired, it seems to have a freshly outraged spin.

If you catch Shamir in a television appearance, he occupies the screen like a car salesman from the 1950s, banging on the fender until the viewer understands his point. If you read his column, his willingness to trash old acquaintances like Shimon Peres and Rabin is particularly bold.

"Rabin and Peres," Shamir says, "are operating on the assumption that there is a certain point at which the Arabs will simply stop threatening Israel. At that point, there will be peace. OK, they figure, it won't be easy. It will be hard. You'll have your occasional acts of terror; you'll get some heat from the Palestinian Authority. But they [Rabin and Peres] really and truly believe this scenario: that to see this day dawn, we simply had to endure all these wars with the Arabs; that the USSR had to fall; that we had to mature."

Shamir pauses and stares intently. "Me?" he asks rhetorically. "I don't believe it. Not for a second. As far as the Arabs are concerned, the 'certain point' they intend to stop at is the Hilton Marina in Tel Aviv. And why am I saying this? Because I respect the Arabs. The left sneers at them, but I don't."

Shamir continues his free fall into the frothy waters of political obloquy. "It's simply a statement of fact. Arabs will not knock their heads against a wall of steel. They have instead a very

finely developed sense of ferreting out the weak. And the fact is that in this part of the world, the weak nations have gotten clobbered. Egypt is, in fact, a military police state drowning in poverty. Hussein is a dictator who - it's no secret - owes his political existence to this country. Algeria's democracy simply self-destructed." Then there are Iran and Iraq, he adds.

"Rabin is a pragmatic guy and he's hoping that he can nevertheless broadcast this pragmatism to the average Israeli who himself has become pretty pragmatic in his pursuit of happiness, in pursuit of the new Israeli dream: the Second Vacation Villa in Zichron Ya'acov."

"And let's face it," continues Shamir, "he, like every Israeli leader, has had to live with the permanent pressure of the

Shamir appeared to have been rummaging for some insight into this country's inner life almost 50 years ago when he created the memorable character of Uri, the naive-born young man in his 1947 novel *Hu Halach Basadot* ("He Walked in the Fields").

Shamir frequently used the conceit of a sabra hero whose life and personality would be shaped by the ideals and goals of his emerging country. Uri, who reappears in later works, is reared amid family entanglements in his kibbutz home and slowly unravels his complex personality via the holy trinity of pre-state Zionist doctrine: fidelity to family, to the archetypal refugee girlfriend and, of course, to the Palmah.

In fact, many of Shamir's early works were devoted to Israel's conflicts before and during the War of Independence - particularly in the stories in his collection entitled *Ad Eilat* ("To Eilat"). His early 1951 novel, *Melech Basar Vedom* (translated as *The King of Flesh and Blood*), has sold 180,000 copies in Hebrew and remains a perennial favorite.

For someone like Shamir, for whom formalities matter little and character counts for a lot, the road to the literary acme of the country's right has been a peculiar one.

Shamir, today a grandfather, was born in

Safed and raised in Tel Aviv by faithful socialist parents. His father had fled Russia in 1915 via Japan, arriving in Seattle. In 1918, his father joined the Jewish Brigade along with others from North America and fought with Allenby. Shamir was educated at the Herzliya Gymnasium, where one of his classmates was Arie (Lova) Eliav who would become an ardent left-wing ideologue. ("A nice guy," says Shamir, "but a foolish dreamer.")

Eventually, Shamir joined Hashomer Hatzair youth movement and held a position on its national board. From 1941 to 1947, he was a member of Kibbutz Mishmar Ha'emek. He served in the Palmah in 1944.

He was the founding editor of *Banuhane*, which started out as the underground publication of the Hagana before it became the official magazine of the IDF.

Shamir's literary and political direction began to change in the 1960s. He started to experiment with his choice of narrative style - in his dialogues he began to use mixtures of Arabisms and slang - and his political views also started to meander precariously out of his Mapam confines.

Some of the outdoors values inculcated in him by Hashomer Hatzair found expression in 1967 in the Land of Israel Movement, which he founded with the poet Natan Alterman and Zvi Shiloah.

After his movement encountered fierce opposition from the left, particularly from Hashomer Hatzair, Shamir responded to the left-wing political infrastructure with characteristic roll-call criticism.

"In fact," he was quoted as saying in a 1986 interview, "it is they who changed course, not I. Who opposed the partition if not Hashomer Hatzair, along with Labor movement ideologues Berl Katznelson and Yitzhak Tabenkin? Who clamored for the right to settle in the most remote, dangerous areas of Israel if not Hashomer Hatzair?"

In 1973, Shamir joined the Likud; but in April 1979, he announced that he was leaving, saying the Likud majority had betrayed the party platform and ideology. The Land of Israel Movement and, later, Tehiya introduced Shamir to practical politics and he found the experience disappointing, at odds with his literary soul. "They were the most frustrating years of my life; the bickering, compromises, coalitions, deals - utterly mortifying."

Shamir's dual interests - literature and politics - found expression in April at the 37th annual conference of the embattled Hebrew Writers' Association at Beit

lived its usefulness.

Even worse, its "purist" bylaws are now considered to be anachronistic, politically incorrect and perhaps even racist.

Specifically irksome to critics of the association is the bylaw which states that a published Israeli author who writes in a language other than Hebrew cannot be granted membership.

At the conference, the "purist" faction, Shamir among them, steadfastly opposed any changes to the association's canon. For staking out this position they were denounced as "closet racists" who were simply looking for excuses to exclude Israeli Arabs from membership.

separate Hebrew Writers' Association - the association was actually founded by Bialik in 1937 - we establish little ghetto.

"Once upon a time, there was a need to unite the literary Hebrew forces, so to speak. Today, it's dangerous. All those who speak about the purity of Hebrew and of Hebrew literature are racists using concepts which are not part and parcel of our nation. What they are really afraid of is the Arabs."

In a sense what happened at the Hebrew Writers' Association conference vindicated Shamir. He has long argued that there is a creeping political malaise which he calls "post-Zionism." Not only has this silence been gnawing at the foundation of the country's cultural life, maintains Shamir, but now it's even attacking the big mama root itself: Hebrew.

"This current government, and I don't say this lightly, is the first post-Zionist government of Israel. So everything is upside down now. Everything is being reassessed. Our language, our history, our literature is now being seen through the post-Zionist prism. Old battles - like the supremacy in this country of the Hebrew language over other languages - are suddenly subject to debate again. And it's felt, sometimes in ripples and sometimes in waves, in every sphere of life."

"The truth is," says Shamir, "that this country was built by Zionists. Until this current government, every single government was a Zionist one. Zionist meaning, the Jewish nation must return to live in Israel, in all of Israel."

"And to live means to rejuvenate the Jewish culture, the language - Hebrew - [and] Jewish traditions. That's Zionism, and without it, this nation could not have existed. These essential principles were always clear to everyone. For example, even when the founders of the Technion started to lobby for instruction in the

German language, the idea was bootied out. No way. The study and implementation of the Hebrew language was and continues to be - and I see this with the four Russian immigrant families from Sverdlovsk who I adopted - an integral part of the Zionist experience and the immigrant experience."

"But the post-Zionist stream of thought," stresses Shamir, "has begun to press for 'equality' by, in fact, erasing all ethnic differences in this country. The message is: If we are the dominant language and culture, we are, ergo, ethnocentrists and racists. It's absurd. This was why they agitated to have the committee [which oversees association policy] to admit non-Hebrew Israeli writers to its ranks. This is why the motion was defeated."

According to Shamir, there are several overlapping reasons why the Israeli academic and intellectual communities are in the throes of what he says is a heady post-Zionist Oktoberfest and why, in general, they tend to gravitate to leftist politics.

The first reason, he says, has its roots in the old Mapai-Histadrut pieties. "The nationalist camp neither raised nor cultivated a generation of thinkers and that's because, over many years, the Histadrut and Mapai - today they call it the Labor Party - simply took over every sphere of development in this country: health, the economy, agriculture, the newspapers. They received all the money; they built the schools, the institutes of higher learning. The right-wing parties had no access, no opportunity to create a reservoir of people."

"Secondly, the world of academe generally tends to drift toward a leftist orientation," observes Shamir. "Why? Because the legitimate concept of playing the role of the 'doubter' is a natural role for the intellectual, for the scholar, the mind trained to test and probe. So if the establishment tells you to ship off and fight a war in Vietnam, the intellectual is the logical person to ask why."

"In Israel, where we are very cosmopolitan, very Jewish, very aware of trends, the intellectuals were deeply affected by the post-colonialist fever which had gripped Europe after World War II. Africa, for example, was freed from the white European's clutches and a giant cathartic sense of guilt ensued. There was the sense - and it was true - that a terrible injustice had been done to the African nations. Left-wing figures like Sartre and Picasso were seen as the champions of the post-colonialist period. I think there is also an element of false Christian piety running through, to love one's enemy."

Shamir believes the Israeli intellectual absorbed this "post-colonialist syndrome" and tried it on for size, even at the risk of opening himself up to self-hatred. "Even at the risk," he adds, "of knowing that this sort of sentiment would be used as a live weapon in the hands of our enemies who, of course, have no such Western hang-ups, although they've become experts at watching us self-destruct with ours."

The Israeli intellectual, according to Shamir, "is the sort who follows the trend, even if the trend declares that Che Guevara is the archetypal hero, even if the Nazi war machine destroyed six million Jewish lives and made the point, we thought for all time, that the Jew is always in danger. Nevertheless, the Israeli intellectual also wants to rail against his government, go against the establishment, be anti-patriotic, hate himself with an appropriate degree of post-colonial self-loathing."

"The Six Day War was the great litmus test," says Shamir. "Suddenly the Israeli intellectual was faced with a dilemma. He looked in the mirror and asked: Was the victory against the Arab states legitimate or have I committed a horrible colonialist crime against other nations? Have I perhaps conquered strange lands which I have no rights to? Is Zionism actually a form of colonialism?"

Shamir says that at this juncture in the nation's history, when the intellectual community and leftists like Lova Eliav



Shamir points out that there is an umbrella writers' group to serve the needs of authors "writing in Arabic, Yiddish, Russian, Spanish and every other language under the sun." The group, the Israel Writers' Association, has an annual budget from the Arts Ministry of NIS 111,000, one-tenth that of the Hebrew Writers' Association.

However, to demonstrate that concern for the survival of the Hebrew language is justified, Shamir points out that he is equally bent out of shape over "the Americanization of the Hebrew language and Israeli culture in general."

He is disturbed immensely, for example, when he sees signs and billboards and advertisements in English only. The way Shamir sees it, what the Arabs haven't succeeded in doing, Madison Avenue has.

"The Hebrew language," he says, "is under attack. The problem of the Americanization of Israel is an extension of the Americanization of the world in general. American culture is being dumped wholesale into the entire world. It's cheap. It's quick. It's aggressive. It's in the movies, on television. Do you know what destroyed communism? Jeans. Jeans and rock [music]. In Israel, in particular this addition to things American is turned on high volume."

Shamir has no regrets about his record as a watchdog for the Hebrew-language when he was a legislator.

In 1980, he announced his intention to submit a private member's bill designed to protect the Hebrew language from what he called "jargonization." Latinized words, instead of Hebrew, were popping up all over the country, he complained at the time. The bill was never formally introduced.

Critics said the bill demonstrated Shamir's totalitarian leanings. It would have banned the showing of non-dubbed foreign-language films and would have required advertising, signs, official correspondence and instruction for use of products to be in Hebrew only. It would have allowed for Arabic on the condition that Hebrew be used simultaneously on all Arabic official documents.

Today, Shamir, is literary editor of *Nariv*, a bimonthly political magazine which he calls "the last distinctly Zionist publication in Israel."

Shamir says the country will haul itself out of the buried hulk of psychological wreckage he believes the government has inflicted upon it. He sees salvation coming - for him, a secular Jew - from strange places: "a large Zionist aliyah from America; in Gush Emunim; in Bnei Akiva and some of the other youth movements. These groups attract the sort of people who know who they are, who aren't plagued by self-doubt. They represent the ideal."

Shamir also says he has worked up a grudging admiration for the haredim whose "anti-Zionist stance and their refusal to participate fully in the Jewish communal life of this country I totally reject and condemn but whose devotion to the faith I deeply admire."

As something of a cultural purist himself, Shamir appreciates their rigidly approach to Israeli culture, their refusal to get sucked into the maw of modernity. "I accept their criticism of the permissiveness and moral corruption in Israeli society. They are right in this respect and have a message worth listening to."

Shamir recalls he once met an elderly Jew on a particularly tawdry section of Tel Aviv's Dizengoff Street. "The man stopped me and, gesturing to the street scene, told me, 'Reb Moshe, for this we died? For this we are getting killed every day?'"

"And the old Jew was right. It was garish. There were prostitutes, cheap American rock music blaring, all sorts of 20th-century idol worship being practiced, with blank-faced Israeli kids milling about. I don't agree with Shulamit Aloni's view which is essentially, 'To hell with the haredim. Who cares what they think?' I felt this man deserved an answer."

"Menachem Begin gave back Sinai, which is a travesty generations of Israelis will pay for. A fiasco. The root of all evil," says Shamir.

were gripped by what he calls a massive attack of self-doubt, he formed the Land of Israel Movement.

"My years in Hashomer Hatzair had given me a great love of the Land of Israel, all of it. We used to crawl behind every rock and crevice. I felt, after 1967, that we had liberated the historical Land of Israel. I saw this as the realization of the Zionist dream in toto. Correspondingly, I began to believe that the concept of land for peace was a tragically deluded one."

Why deluded? "Because," says Shamir, "the world continues to be a cruel place. Do we need proof? All this antiestablishment post-Zionist fever, all this chipping away at the foundations of Zionism - just because it's academically speaking, politically expedient and cool - is foolish and dangerous."

"Here we have an example of someone like Shimon Peres who really has begun to believe his own false utopian myths which undoubtedly not a single Arab leader shares. No wonder Rabin can't stand him with all his highfalutin nonsense and with his idiotic statements like [Peres' recent remark in Germany] 'Ich bin ein Bayerian.'"

Shamir sighs. If he imagines what it's like for Rabin to have a ditsy foreign minister beside him, he also speculates about Rabin's internal dilemmas. Though not personally friendly, Shamir recalls a certain cordiality which Rabin extended him during his Knesset days.

"I remember when I arrived at the Ninth Knesset as a new member, Rabin, who of course knew my politics, came over to me and said, 'Moshe, your presence adds honor to this house.'"

Rabin is essentially a practical man. I remember how he opposed the Lavi project out of practical, financial considerations. He hopes this patchwork quilt of treaties will prevent a war. Nevertheless, I

think his handshake with Arafat really shattered something inside him. He's not an actor. He's clumsy. In any case, he's not a smooth fool like Peres."

Back at the Hebrew Writers' Association conference, Shamir remained cool even after the startling opening remarks by President Weizman to the venerable assembly. "You know who you remind me of?" Weizman barked from the podium to the audience dominated by older writers. "I once had this aunt who nagged me that she wanted to see Masada from above, from the air. So finally I arranged to have one of my pilots fly her over Masada and afterwards I asked him how it went. And he told me, 'Thank God there was a young stewardess aboard. She lowered the average age to 76.'"

Nor did Shamir go berserk when the next speaker, Arts Minister Shulamit Aloni, suggested that the association adopt the recent findings of the Ben-Porat commission that it admit non-Hebrew language Israeli writers into its ranks and change the organization's name to the Association of Israeli Writers. Her remarks were roundly booed and unpleasant epithets were hurled. The conference received an ocean of bad publicity.

Where was the literary meeting of great minds? Shamir waves his hand in a dismissive gesture. He doesn't explain why, but it could be because his ears are simply inured to the criticism.

The fact that the Hebrew Writers' Association has been boycotted by Israel's major literary figures, is, says Shamir, symptomatic of the post-Zionist philosophy which has gripped Israeli intellectuals and members of academe. (Amos Oz noted just before the conference that 23 years after he left the association, "nothing has changed. But neither have my opinions. I don't know what goes on there, nor do I want to.")

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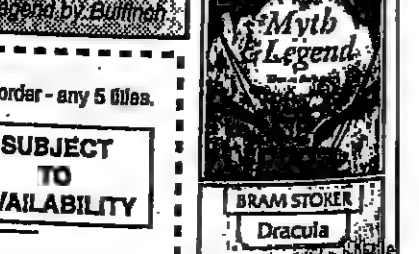
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See Friday issue, 9 June 1995

Bleak and Bitter

THE INFORMATION by Martin Amis.
Harmony, New York. 374 pp., \$24.

By Matt Nesvisky

The *Information* fully justifies its great pre-publication buzz, a buzz that reverberated on both sides of the Atlantic. But the buzz, as buzz often is, was somewhat beside the point.

Literary London and New York had fastened on Martin Amis's fiercely negotiated \$800,000 advance for the book, a sum required, so it was said, to pay for the author's messy divorce and for a new set of book-tour teeth. Gossips also clucked over Amis's firing of his literary agent, who happened to be the wife of his fellow novelist and snooker pal Julian Barnes. And of course they reveled in the irony of the book's subject, which is literary envy.

But what threatened to get drowned out by the buzz was that Martin Amis had written what is arguably the blackest comedy of his career. And for Martin Amis, who ever since publishing *The Rachel Papers* at age 24 has been the wicked young man of English letters, that's saying something. It's as if William Burroughs suddenly discovered whole new realms of nightmare that in his wildest drug indulgence he never imagined existed.

For Amis, you see, it used to be pimple-popping and the shabbiness of mass culture. Oh, yes, and there was that nuclear threat. But uncouth behavior, pervasive tackiness and general annihilation are easy targets. Now Amis has dug down deep into the human psyche. And what he finds isn't terribly funny. What he finds is the horrifying capacity and compulsion that human beings have to hurt other people.

In the cosmic view it is of course terrifically funny that we're built that way. But down here it isn't funny at all.

The Information has funny touches, but they are just that, comic dabs and doodles applied, one might suppose, to prevent the reader, or perhaps the author, from succumbing to terminal depression. Even the throwaways are infused with as much grief as comic relief: a pub is called *The Slug and Cabbage*; the marital intimacy of *Middlemarch*'s Casaubon and Dorothea is likened to "trying to get a raw oyster into a parking meter."

Typical Amis *filis*, yes, but Martin Amis isn't all that



young any longer, and a dozen books into a career there's a bleakness and bitterness that few readers expected. Consider, even if it makes you shudder, Richard Tull.

Richard is the central figure in *The Information*. Richard is a failed novelist whose humiliation is increased

by the skyrocketing success of his best friend and fellow novelist Gwyn Barry. Richard perceives Gwyn as hideously shallow, immensely untalented and egregiously overestimated.

That all of this is true is of no comfort. To make matters worse, Gwyn is handsome, has a rich and beautiful wife, and apparently cannot help but succeed in everything he does. Richard's own failure may well be deserved (he does after all write unreadable books), but Gwyn's unmerited success is too much to bear. Richard determines to right the scales of justice by destroying his friend.

Richard devises scheme after scheme to bring his rival low. With escalating cunning and madness, Richard plots to irritate, to distract, to harm and ultimately to thoroughly discredit. If it means having Gwyn beaten up on the street, so be it. If it means cuckolding Gwyn, so be it. If it means ruining Gwyn's reputation, so be it.

So be none of it. Gwyn blithely sails on to every new sales record, Hollywood contract, accolade and prize. By novel's end the scales of justice are not righted. In this cosmos there is no justice. There is only absurdity and chaos, cruelty and corruption.

To be sure, *The Information* contains some wonderful set pieces: the moribund literary magazine where Richard does hack work; the vanity press (presided over by one Balfour Cohen) where Richard edits; the dual book tour in America where Gwyn Barry is greeted with the literary equivalent of Beatlemania while Richard finds only new depths of humiliation. And to be sure, Amis writes some of the most incandescent prose to be found anywhere.

But it's grim, grim, grim. How reminiscent of, and yet how dissimilar this book is to the novel that launched Papa Kingsley Amis's career a half-century ago, *Lucky Jim*, you will recall, featured an anti-hero with all manner of undesirable attributes who wreaked mischief on his colleagues as he struggled to secure his place on the greasy pole of academia. Yet we cheered Jim, we reveled in his antics, we exulted in comedy leaving the world more or less afloat.

In *The Information*, everything remains awrong. What happened in the last half-century? The last half-century happened, that's what. This hasn't been a happy 50 years for our civilization, and that's not Martin Amis's fault.

Martin Amis has always been flashier and more flamboyant than his father, but he has also grown far more thoughtful. In his last novel, *Time's Arrow*, Martin Amis took a peculiar but quite penetrating look at the Holocaust, and I suspect that what he found fuming in the heart of humanity affected him deeply. As well it might.

Which is why *The Information* transcends its subject matter to become the deep and troubling novel that it is.

Mr. Bellow's Planet

CONVERSATIONS WITH SAUL BELLOW edited by Gloria L. Cronin and Ben Siegel. Jackson, Mississippi, University of Mississippi Press. 303 pp. Price not stated.

By David Brauner

Soon after Saul Bellow's first novel, *Dangling Man*, was published in 1944, he joined *Time* magazine as a film critic. "I was young, inexperienced, and tired of knocking about," he recalled many years later in an interview.

"It was a short-lived career," the interviewer reports. "On Bellow's second day, *Time* senior editor Whittaker Chambers, who would win notoriety as Alger Hiss's accuser, asked Bellow what he thought of Wordsworth. 'What does that have to do with film reviewing?' asked Bellow. When Chambers demanded an answer, Bellow said that Wordsworth was a romantic poet. Chambers said, 'There's no place for you in this organization.' So Bellow went back to writing books."

By the time this story was published in a 1979 *Chicago Tribune* magazine interview, Saul Bellow had nine more books and the Nobel Prize for Literature under his belt.

In *Conversations with Saul Bellow*, a collection of his published interviews spanning the last four decades, devoted aficionados and literary groupies can follow the author's zigzag career, his

convoluted idiosyncrasies about society, intellectualism and writing, and, to a lesser extent, his private life (four divorces and five wives, and three sons by his first three spouses).

By most accounts Bellow is a natty dresser. One writer describes him as a "keen-eyed, gentlemanly-looking man," while another points out his "sensual mouth and hooded molten eyes."

Many of the interviews begin with statements like "Saul Bellow doesn't like to be interviewed," or "he dislikes being photographed," or "he is an intensely private man who shuns the talk-show circuit and the trappings of celebrity."

Nevertheless, his anthologized dialogues amount to a not inconsiderable 300 pages of hard grilling. If he'd truly wanted to avoid the limelight, he might have written under a pseudonym like the mysterious William Wharton.

Bellow himself admits late in life, "I wanted some recognition, of course, but I didn't need, or expect, super-certification."

This book tells us that "Bellow grasped quickly the lesson learned by many of his literary colleagues: to use the interview form as a means of responding to critics (literary and personal) and of clarifying aspects of his own thought and fiction he felt had been misinterpreted." But rather than using the interview form to fight his critics' fire with fire, Bellow produces smokescreens to confound the enemy while agonizing over the identity of the real Bellow.

He's a morning worker (apparently the hours between seven and one are holy, not

American Jew (accidentally born in Canada), a university-based thinker and a regular guy growing up on the wrong side of Chicago's tracks, the more Bellow conceals himself and the meaning of his literature under heaps of words.

As with his books, once the covers are closed Bellow's interviews leave the reader with cloudy impressions rather than solid memories. Perhaps that is his literary discovery: that real life is made up of disconnected strings of incidents, snippets of conversation and random choices that only gain vague significance in the hands of a skilled writer or interviewee observing and commenting on them.

At the end of *Conversations*, one isn't sure whether Bellow has had an easy, satisfying and productive life or a difficult, frustrating and underachieving time of it. The former reflects the acclaim he's garnered while the latter is undoubtedly closer to what Bellow himself feels about his gift. The trouble with Bellow's planet is that it's rarely coated with sugar, making it rather hard to take.

BELLOW rewrote his famous 1964 novel *Herzog* 15 to 25 times. "I have a trunk full of manuscripts," he says. (There's no indication that he's switched to using a computer.) He remarks: "The main reason for rewriting is not to achieve a smooth surface, but to discover the inner truth of your characters."

He's a morning worker (apparently the hours between seven and one are holy, not

to be disturbed), a heavy coffee drinker, does not write outlines and begins at the beginning. "I get full of excitement which prevents foresight and planning. I regret it when I get into trouble: a book two-thirds done and I don't know how it's going to come out."

He is a self-disciplined perfectionist (suffering from the "Protestant disease of worldly asceticism"), interested in the whole book and the book as a whole, including its production quality.

Before he was 16, he had torn up two novels. When his first novel was accepted, he had second thoughts and destroyed the manuscript.

On the one hand he says, "Isn't writing a spiritual activity? I seem always to assume that," and then he contradicts himself, saying not much later, "Writing was not meant to be an occult operation; it was not meant to be an esoteric secret."

Bellow is invariably asked about his Jewishness. Like so many of his characters, he has a Jewish name — he was born Solomon Bellows — but curiously little else that evinces a Jewish identity. For him being a Jew is a "basic set of primitive facts ... my given."

Nor does the existence of Israel exercise his intellect in this volume. He never once mentions his time as a correspondent reporting on the 1967 Six Day War or his stay in Jerusalem in 1975, which spawned *To Jerusalem and Back: A Personal Account*.

Saul Bellow is now just shy of his 80th birthday. He has certainly had a charmed career, one which many wannabe writers would envy. It's only towards the end of his conversations that regrets and disappointments creep in, somewhat overshadowing the successes.

BOOKS

Puerile Energy



JERUSALEM MOSAIC: Young Voices From the Holy City by Isaac Mosezon and Lois Stavsky. New York, Four Winds Press; Toronto, Maxwell Macmillan Canada. 160 pp. \$15.95.

By Netty C. Gross

Isaac Mosezon, an English professor, and his wife, Lois Stavsky, a veteran New York City public-school teacher, spent the summers of 1992 and 1993 in Jerusalem, interviewing teenagers for a book which they hoped would offer an attractive snapshot of the city's multicultural youth.

The authors, Jewish liberals who also have profoundly ecumenical feelings about Jerusalem, interviewed teenagers they met at random, on the main pedestrian malls, at parks and in various neighborhoods.

Eventually, they culled 36 monologues out of their research — "voices" as disparate as Leah, a 14-year-old American Israeli from Har Nor who sees the world in terms of "frum" and "goyim," and Sami, a 19-year-old Moslem Palestinian from Wadi Joz who hates the Druse and Beduin

more than the Israeli army.

The result is a compelling book worth reading, but undoubtedly not the one the authors intended. Instead of producing a mosaic, in which, according to the prologue, "each stone in this uniquely beautiful and compelling city is as different as her children," the book has the puerile energy and dissent of a Jackson Pollack canvas.

The book profiles 24 Jewish teens who vary from acute apostates to Eastern European fatalist fanatics; from conventional Zionists to get-me-out-of-here-ists. There are eight interviews with Palestinians — five with Moslems and three with Christians subjects.

The rest of the young people in the book have smorgasbord identities like David, an American boy living in Baka, the son of a Texas Baptist minister who attends an Assembly of God School in Shufaf, where most of his classmates are Moslem Arabs.

He loves his church, would like to join the IDF and lives in anticipation of defeating the Devil at Armageddon, which he explains is located in the lower Galilee region. He wears Armageddon Airline T-shirts.

Lumping all these teens together — New

York City melting-pot style — bespeaks a certain cultural unsophistication on the part of the authors. Jerusalem, where the existing religious and ethnic status quo has been painfully achieved, is not New York, where multiculturalism is the font from which the city gets its energy. Not yet, anyway.

The book delivers fascinating idiosyncratic tidbits from the different walks of life which have the cumulative effect of disproving the authors' stated purpose. There is no common thread to these lives; they do not comprise any mosaic.

If anything, the book suggests that despite specific cultural habits common to both extreme religious Jews and Moslems — i.e. arranged marriages and musings about God — all these teenagers are probably best off exactly where they are. Far away from each other.

The sabras profiled in the book speak with the surest degree of adolescent obnoxiousness and abandon. Daniella, a 12-year-old sabra, believes that haredim "stink" and that Christianity makes more sense because "you're praying to a person, Jesus, something you can see."

Seventeen-year-old Yankels, the son of Salmar hassidim and a father of a newborn baby (his wife is also 17), describes his shock when on his wedding night his

father explained what a husband's duties are. He had met his wife only once for a short time.

"I didn't believe it, so I went to ask my rabbi. I couldn't imagine being engaged in something so, so physical. Such is the way of God."

Omer, 18, hardly relishes the idea of being drafted into the IDF. "Let them hire all the stupid bastards who want to play with guns. Do I need these goons with the officers' stripes playing with my head for the next three years?"

Seventeen-year-old Nitza, a Meretz activist, loves to dance, loves school and literature, doesn't want to get married, thinks too many German Jews live in Rehavia and may move to London one day.

Shai, 19, the embittered son of divorced deaf mutes who was placed in hassidic foster care from which he ran away, says he spent eight months in an army jail. He had gone AWOL when his unit was posted to Lebanon, because he wanted to visit his dying mother. He hopes to marry and live in Holland.

Are there any normal Israeli teens?

Yes, there's Ariella and Avner and Dalia and the immigrants — Gina from Baku, Leonid from Moscow and Dan from the Gondar province in Ethiopia, all of whom evince moderation of views and grace. The four teenage American Jewish immigrants profiled, however, sound like confused misfits.

The Palestinian subjects are far more decorous, though they too occasionally let their guard down.

Nineteen-year-old Re'em is a Christian Israeli Arab student at the Hebrew University who supports George Habash but reveals that she cannot understand what's going on "inside her father's head." Her father, she believes, "wishes he was Jewish; he says he would rather live in a state run by Jews than Palestinians."

While Sa'ana, a 14-year-old girl from Ramallah, admits she was happy when she heard about Saddam's missiles flying in the Gulf War so she could "die with her enemies," 14-year-old Zadiya confesses that her least favorite subject in school is Arabic.

"I love reading and speaking Hebrew and recently read a book about the Shoah, a subject not taught in our school."

Nineteen-year-old Abed from Silwan — who claims that 50 Jewish girls married to Moslems are living there ("they are loved by everyone in our village") — explains that beyond the establishment of a Palestinian state, all he wants out of life is a hotel job.

2,000 iconographical collections and many private archives.

TO GIVE a few examples of the books illustrated and described in this volume: A manuscript of the classic rabbinic work, *Sefer Mitzvot Katan*, was written in 1386 in a fluent and professional hand by a woman scribe. Over 4,000 medieval Jewish scribes are known but fewer than 10 were women.

The scribe here was Hannah bat Menahem Zion, working in Cologne. What is remarkable, given the medieval Jewish milieu, is not that there were so few women scribes but that there were any at all. However, in her annotation Prof. Colette Sirat comments that most of the 45,000 known manuscripts are anonymous, and some of these could have been written by unknown women scribes, although she doubts if there were many.

Of the 34 incunabula in the library (a figure comparing with other great libraries), a few pages are reproduced. One of them, an almost complete copy of Jacob ben Asher's *Arba' Turim* dating from 1493, was the first book printed in Turkey not only in Hebrew but in any language. The printers were refugees who had been expelled from Spain the previous year and who had brought with them typographical material from their country of origin, where Jewish books were already being printed.

A book written in Amsterdam by Saul Levi Mortera, president of the tribunal that excommunicated Spinoza, is the most comprehensive work up to its time by a Jewish author about all forms of Christian dogma and contains the first critical analysis of the New Testament in a vernacular (written in Portuguese, it was published in Spanish translation).

Another exciting work is David Friedlander's *LeSebuch Für Jüdische Kinder*, the first modern book for Jewish children. Published in Berlin in 1779, it includes Berechiah ha-Nakdan's well-known fables translated from Hebrew into German by Moses Mendelssohn, who worked with Friedlander on the project.

A further example is the manuscript letter by Jerusalem Sephardi chief rabbi Raphael Meir Panigel, dating from the late 19th century, reacting to a suggestion that part of the money raised in Amsterdam for support of the Holy Land communities should be given to those working the new settlement. The chief rabbi, while acknowledging the importance of the work of settlement, responded that the money was needed to maintain scholars and ensure religious observance and none of it should be diverted to the settlers.

But in their intolerance of authority, they set a dangerous precedent in the region.

Army of Converts

THE JANISSARIES by Godfrey Goodwin. London, Saqi Books. 288 pp. No price stated.

By Debra Stahl

Any serious discussion of the "Sick Man of Europe," as the Ottoman Empire became known to the European powers, must include an examination of the role played by the janissaries in the shaping of Ottoman policy and their subsequent impact on world history. At their peak, they were an elite infantry corps comprising one-fourth of the Ottoman army. Godfrey Goodwin describes their significance and decline over the centuries.

An understanding of the origins of the janissaries — in Turkish *Devirme*, and "Christian Levy" in English — throws light on their uniquely powerful position in the sultan's *saray* (palace), as well as their notorious propensity for unbridled behavior.

Goodwin describes in great detail the recruiting of Christian children, their education at the *saray* or subsidiary colleges, their placement in myriad military positions and civil-service jobs, and their ultimate emergence as a dangerous brotherhood committed to self-preservation.

Goodwin argues that the janissaries were not entirely to blame for their subsequent excesses. He maintains that "the shabby janissaries merely mirrored, after all, the society for whom they (occasionally) fought." Their time-honored custom of overturning cauldrons as a symbol of revolt against a sultan's various policies, as well as their dreaded drinking bouts, which often ended in the pillage of locals, reflected deficiencies in leadership and society as a whole.

Ottoman life was riddled with corruption. Fear of enlightenment led to a decline in military performance as the once dreaded janissary artillery and swords could no longer compete with European armaments.

Also, personality cults had their effect when individuals other than the sultan controlled the janissaries and at times led them in rebellion. Most importantly, the extraordinary Ottoman attention to detail, once the secret of their success, faltered. The previously careful selection of only Christian candidates with leadership abilities, superior education and fighting skills was allowed to lapse.

Moslems came to envy the power and prestige of this army of converts. The formal introduction of Moslems in 1582 coincided with the decline of the janissaries. In time the corps became overloaded with criminals who were increasingly hostile towards authority, and this led to its destruction. But debauchery was far from the whole story. During the 15th and 16th centuries they brought glory and wealth to the Ottomans.

Goodwin describes how, in "cities of silk," actually army camps, the soldiers "lodged more grandly than at home." The imperial tent or *otak* (high dome) took several years to construct. The one made for Sultan Mehmet IV was supported by 16 poles and covered in satin.

Senior members of the entourage who participated in the major campaigns had personal tents commensurate with their dignity as well as working tents for their clerks and the records of state which traveled with the sultan and his army. "Government was exercised in the field just as it was in the *saray*."

Despite all their baggage, the janissaries "did not struggle and moved at great speed aided by their excellent railings," Goodwin writes.

But in their intolerance of authority, they set a dangerous precedent in the region.



Yoram Bar, 'Candle at Noon,' Keter.

READING FROM RIGHT TO LEFT BY JEFF GREEN

Jacob Frank (1726-1791) was one of the spiciest (and most unsavory) characters in early modern Jewish history. Claiming to be the messiah, he became the leader of a fairly large group of secret Sabbateans — Jews who continued to believe that Shabbetai Zvi (1626-1676) was the messiah, even after his conversion to Islam in 1666.

Frank's followers, mainly centered in Poland, believed that there were two paths to redemption: absolute righteousness and absolute sinfulness. Since, given human nature, the former was rather unlikely, and the latter was a lot more thrilling, that is the path they took. Frank himself had a considerable sexual appetite and a fertile imagination, so mystical orgies became central in his cult.

Yoram Bar, a kibbutznik, has written a solid and convincing historical novel about Jacob Frank entitled *Ner Batzohorayim* ("Candle at Noon"), published by Keter. His book is based on careful research and can be read as a history of the rise of the Frankist movement. The narrator and main character, Nahman of Krzywicz, actually existed. In Bar's book he speaks as a brilliant young rabbi from Podolia, a poor and oppressed region of Poland. Nahman was secretly a Sabbatean, pretending to observe the commandments strictly yet violating them in symbolic ways in order to bring redemption. On a trip to Salonika to visit the Doenmeh, a sect of Sabbateans who pretended to convert to Islam in order to continue their antinomian Jewish practices, Nahman encounters Frank and believes he has found the messiah. It is Nahman who persuades Frank to come to Podolia and who organizes the nucleus of his followers.

The Frankists tried to conceal their most outrageous practices and beliefs both from other Jews and from the Catholic and secular authorities. Rather they presented themselves as anti-Talmudic, messianic Jews, rebelling against the oppressive structure of prohibitions imposed by the rabbis. After long negotiations and several public trials and disputations, Frank and his followers converted to Catholicism, hoping to receive land of their own in return for their conversion. The Church, however, merely wanted to use the Frankists against rabbinic Judaism. Bar follows this process closely, bringing out the drama of the events and also stressing Nahman's inner spiritual struggles as he followed his leader along a path that violated every Jewish instinct in his heart. For despite his Sabbateanism, Nahman continued to view himself as a religious Jew.

Bar is very insightful in presenting Nahman's motives for choosing to follow Frank — portrayed as a charismatic madman and avid opportunist — and for remaining faithful to him despite Frank's hideous abuses of power and wildly capricious behavior.

Frank's career would provide great material for a far more sensational novel than Bar's restrained and historically accurate book. Naturally one takes a prurient interest in stories about spouse-swapping, orgies disguised as religious ceremonies (or vice versa), and amazing destinies: Nahman begins life as a poor rabbi and ends up as a wealthy Catholic businessman who speaks Polish with an odd accent and secretly observes Jewish dietary laws. But one always wonders how important these phenomena were. In fact, Frank's followers were relatively few and his obscure movement petered out entirely by the mid-19th century, as did Sabbateanism.

YEHUDA LIEBES, a leading scholar in the history of Jewish mysticism, argues convincingly that these movements were not marginal, eccentric, and, ultimately, irrelevant to mainstream Judaism. In a new collection of his articles, *Sod Ha'emuna Hashabbaiti* ("On Sabbateanism and Its Kabbalah"), published by the Bialik

Institute, he places them in the context of his broader field of study: Jewish mythology.

The first of these articles, which were revised for the purpose of this collection, is a general introduction to Sabbatean messianism. Liebes carefully separates the closely interwoven strands of Jewish messianic belief in order to bring out what was unique about the Sabbateans, essentially those who continued to believe secretly in Shabbetai Zvi even after he converted and died. The following chapters are organized chronologically and analyze the thought and writing of the disciples and exponents of Shabbetai Zvi from his contemporaries through the beginnings of the hassidic movement.

The sheer mass of sources upon which this book is based is daunting: there are 265 pages of text and 180 pages of densely printed notes. Often in scholarly works based on obscure texts, one feels that much material has been included mainly because the author has taken so much trouble to recover it. If, for example, a scholar has invested a month in deciphering a mystical manuscript in faulty Aramaic, he's going to tell you about it whether or not it advances his argument. Liebes, however, does not drown the reader in his sources. His writing is clear, and his fondness for the information he supplies does not distract him from the points he wants to make.

IN JEWISH sources biblical Edom came to be viewed as the symbol of impurity, an allegory for the Roman Empire and later for the Christian states of Europe. Now, however, Israeli tourists can visit Edom, which is where Petra is situated. *Ariel*, a periodical dedicated to knowledge of Eretz Yisrael, has devoted issue 107-108 to "Jordan and its Sites: Geography and History, the Antiquities of Jordan." Although it is also handsomely produced on glossy paper with fine photographs, this publication is not to be confused with the other *Ariel*, the Israeli quarterly of the arts published in English and several other languages.

The Hebrew *Ariel* has been appearing for 16 years, and its volumes have been dedicated to such topics as "Jaffa and its Sites," "The Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem," "Museums in Israel," and "Early Photographs of Eretz Yisrael."

The current volume on Jordan is a model of what such books should be. There is nothing fancy about the layout, but it's very readable and interspersed with well-chosen, clearly reproduced and informative photographs, maps and drawings. The volume is organized so that readers can immediately find the information they need. However, once they have located this material, they are quite likely to be attracted to the adjacent articles. You may, for example, have been curious about Jordan during the Crusader period, but you might not have been aware of the importance of the Circassian element in the Jordanian population and the history of its settlement there in the 19th century.

The volume is divided into five parts: an introductory historical and geographical section; articles on the history of Jordan from the prehistoric period to the present; a survey of the main routes through Jordan from biblical times through the railroad era; descriptions of the rich and varied antiquities of the country; and 19th- and 20th-century travelers' reports, including some photographs taken during the trip to Trans-Jordan made by the students and teachers of the Herzliya Gymnasium in 1927.

Little in this volume indicates that it was written in a country that was officially in a state of war with Jordan until very recently. On the other hand, many of the articles quite properly deal with subjects of particular interest to Hebrew readers, such as accounts of Jewish settlement in Trans-Jordan during the Second Temple period and of Jewish settlement in Trans-Jordan during the Mandate.

MAY 26, 1995 25

Dear Rachel, Dear Dorothy

ALWAYS, RACHEL: The Letters of Rachel Carson and Dorothy Freeman 1952-1964 edited by Martha Freeman. Boston, Beacon Press. 567 pp. \$35.

By Shirley Granovetter

These letters of Rachel Carson, the pioneer of the environmental movement, and Dorothy Freeman reveal a Damon and Pythias friendship that became the desperately needed and essential element of support in both their lives. The dust jacket proclaims this book to be "an intimate portrait of a remarkable friendship."

Readers' reactions are bound to be many and varied. On the one hand, you feel like a trespasser or a Peeping Tom, intruding into the most private moments of a sensitive human relationship. On the other hand, you are swept along by a lyrical and loving mood pervading every one of the 567 pages of the book. Also, your heart aches for this lonely crusader, beset by so many personal problems.

And you wonder about little Roger, Rachel's niece's son, adopted by Rachel at her niece's untimely death, having then to lose his "second mother" (when Rachel, herself, died) while he was still a child. Where is he now and how has he survived? What scars does he bear of so many changes and losses in childhood? What a brave little soldier he seems in these letters. Of course we know something of Dorothy's granddaughter, little Martha. She became a lawyer and edited this volume.

At her father's death, Rachel became the sole breadwinner of her extended family,

as well as personal caretaker of her frail niece, of baby Roger, and of her aging mother. That she succeeded against all odds and outside pressure is a tribute to her amazing talent.

How ironic that honors and accolades came to her as she was struggling bravely in her losing battle against cancer. She was unable to realize her dream of traveling the world, even as all these opportunities opened up to her. Stoically facing the evil, invading illness, she continued to write to her dear, dear friend of the beauties of nature, of the joyous aspects of life: the birds of the air, the clouds of the sky, the creatures of the sea, the lovely blooming flowers of every season. Her closeness to nature was responsible for the great happiness and ecstatic moments in her life to the very end.

Rachel and Dorothy met for the first time in 1953 at Southport, Maine, when they became neighbors in their respective summer homes. From the very beginning, the friendship was meant to be. Dorothy was 11 years older and married, but her photographer husband Stanley was very much included in the friendship and admired for his pictures of nature's wonders.

Summers they spent together in Maine. The rest of the year the two women corresponded, often more than once a day, in addition to making frequent phone calls and short visits (Rachel from her home in Maryland and Dorothy from hers in Massachusetts).

In their letters, they pour out their love for each other. There is an early letter to which both correspondents often refer. They entitle it "the hyacinth letter." In it, Rachel writes of "a [mythical] man" who "if he had two pennies he would use one to buy bread and the other to buy a white



hyacinth for his soul." She continues: "you, dearest, are the 'white hyacinth' in which I invest part of my time."

Rachel and Dorothy wrote about the music and books they both loved. I have made a list of books they recommended to each other. The list runs to more than 50 most unusual titles, including some of the loveliest poetry written in the English language. But the number is not significant. What is important is the subject matter: the sea, living creatures, travel and nature.

THIS IS of course not the first book about Rachel Carson. But it is the first book in which Rachel speaks for herself - intimately, honestly, unselfconsciously, as she reveals her dearest thoughts to her dearest friend. They had many "favorites." Their favorite flowers were freesias and hyacinths. Their favorite animal was the cat. They each had two, whom they nurtured and loved. Their favorite birds were the veeries.

Silent Spring, written during the stressful, painful treatments for cancer, was inspired by a letter Rachel received from a

woman distressed by the careless and indiscriminate use of poisonous sprays which caused the instant death of all the birds in her area. Carson was dubbed "a hysterical woman" by the pesticide manufacturers, who, in their efforts to discredit her, spent so much money that the publicity actually aided her.

As we read, we see how unaffected Rachel's letters are. She is not writing for publication. She is writing to her friend. She writes from "under the dryer." She writes from the train and from the plane. She writes about the clever sayings of little Roger and the problems of her cat, Jeffie, as if he were an equal member of the family.

Dear Rachel is a book for anyone interested in the struggles of the woman who woke the world up to our environmental crisis (which seems to be even more frightening now). I hope its publication will inspire a new generation of readers to turn to the prize-winning books that Rachel Carson has left for us and to read them now. They are indeed a treasure that we have inherited from her.

Schama writes at great and ultimately oppressive length of the forest myth in German history. What started as a romantic forging of national character ended as Nazi blood-mysticism.

"It is, of course, painful to acknowledge how ecologically conscientious the most barbaric regime in modern history actually was. Exterminating millions of lives was not at all incompatible with passionate protection for millions of trees."

A middle section of the book turns from trees to water. Schama goes into the Nile cycles of flood and rebirth, and the great fountains of Rome - there is a brilliant passage on Bernini's baroque masterpiece in the Piazza Navona - and on to the elaborate watercourses designed by Italian engineers. He writes of Thames watermen and the annual whitebait feast that became an obligatory calendar date for 19th-century English politicians.

He goes on to mountains: the 19th-century cult of Alpine tourism, the sculptures on Mt. Rushmore - with an enticing account of the long and unsuccessful struggle of Rose Arnold Powell to get Susan B. Anthony's face up alongside the faces of the four men - and other associations of myths and crags.

A final section deals with notions of Arcadia, as a place both of happy nymphs and shepherds, and of the darker legends of goatish Pans and wolf-men. He suggests the same duality for Central Park: bucolic by day, wolfish by night.

Much of the material is interesting; much of it takes on a list-like burden of small anecdotes and minor figures. Schematically, they can be made to fit into Schama's theme of how memory and myth give significance to the landscape. But they become a weary plod. (Los Angeles Times)

The Nature of History

LANDSCAPE AND MEMORY by Simon Schama. New York, Alfred A. Knopf. 578 pp. \$40.

By Richard Eder

Landscape is more than a nourishment that the earth provides to our imaginations. It is a nourishment that our imaginations provide to the earth.

Against the extreme ecological notion of a primal state of wilderness sullied by human civilization, the historian Simon Schama writes: "The wilderness, after all, does not locate itself, does not name itself. It was an act of Congress in 1864 that established Yosemite Valley as a place of sacred significance for the nation, during the war which marked the moment of Fall in the American Garden."

"Nor could the wilderness venerate itself. It needed hallowing visitations from New England preachers like Thomas Starr King, photographers like Leander Wood, Edward Muybridge and Carleton Watkins, painters in oil like Bierstadt and Thomas Moran, and painters in prose like John Muir to represent it as the holy park of the West..."

Landscape and Memory is a series of forays into what Schama calls "the long history of landscape metaphors." We are born in the world but also the world is born in us. In the 18th century, artistic tourists used a Claude-glass, a brown-tint-

ed mirror in which they could frame hills and forests that would contain, ready-made, the dusky romantic ambience of the painter Claude Lorrain.

The Robin Hood legend provided a vision of the bucolic forest so fashionable that none other than Henry VIII led a court procession into the woods, where he was fed a venison breakfast by a green-clad "outlaw" - 16th century greenwood chic. Schama, whose approach to history has a cultural, social, political, economic and mythical sweep, is a writer of restless ideas and poetic insight. He is also a prodigious wielder of facts.

In his books on two such solid subjects as the French Revolution and the Netherlands' golden age, massiveness had its own logic and energy, and poetic insight needed to do no more than play its part.

In this study of how myth and memory frame our landscapes, the subject is more elusive. Schama's insight is ravishing, but the finally unstoppable detail with which he fills it out gives it far too much to ravish. There are too many German foresters, forest mystics, Italian landscape designers, painters of the sublime, Alpine romantics and assorted eccentrics whose anecdotal accounts disperse and often submerge the provocative connection with which Schama begins his book and to which he all too occasionally returns.

THIS INITIAL vision comes with the image of a child in a landscape. The child is himself; his favorite book is Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*, the hill being an ordi-

nary English hill out of which historical and mythical figures emerge for the benefit of a dreamy little boy.

Schama's "hill" was the sedgy, mucky Essex shore of the Thames estuary.

As a schoolchild Schama produced a 12-page "History of the Royal Navy." At the same time he was working on a different link of land and myth. Son of a Polish-Jewish immigrant, he turned in sixpence at his Hebrew school, each penny buying one "leaf" for Israel's tree-planting program.

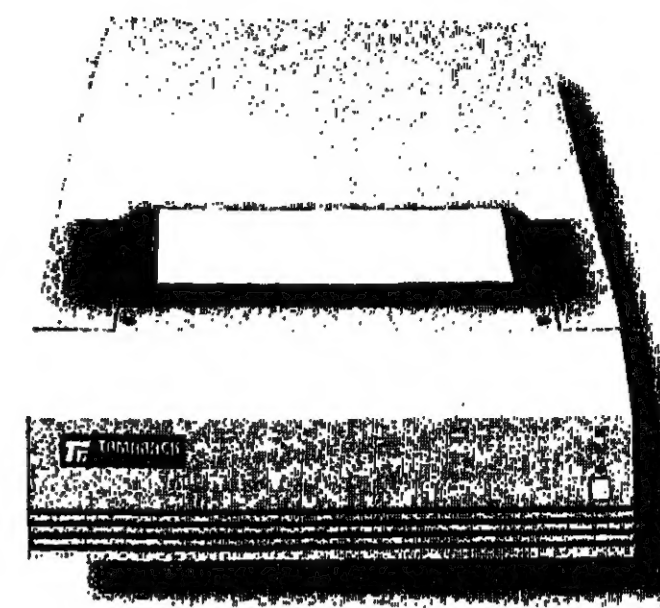
He was putting history into the landscape. We knew that a forest was the opposite to a desert, he writes. "The diaspora was sand. So what should Israel be, if not a forest, fixed and tall?"

A family tradition takes him to the "puszcza," the great forest between Poland and Lithuania. His forebears were Jewish loggers - we get a photograph of lumberjacks in black hats and sidecups - and the landscape contains their memory; as well as all the tormented memories of Polish, Lithuanian and Russian history in that "haunted land where the greatcoat buttons from six generations of fallen soldiers can be found."

He writes of the bison that once roamed the forest, and the appearance of bison and forest in national epics that kept Polish and Lithuanian identity alive. He describes how, when the Nazis invaded Poland, Goering took over the forest for his private hunts, and the forest dwellers were taken away and shot.

Landscape myths can nourish, they can be corrupted, and they can corrupt.

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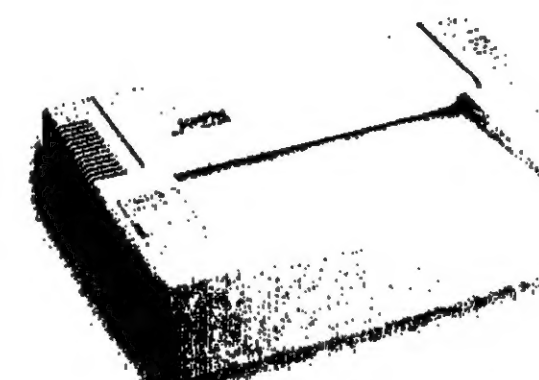


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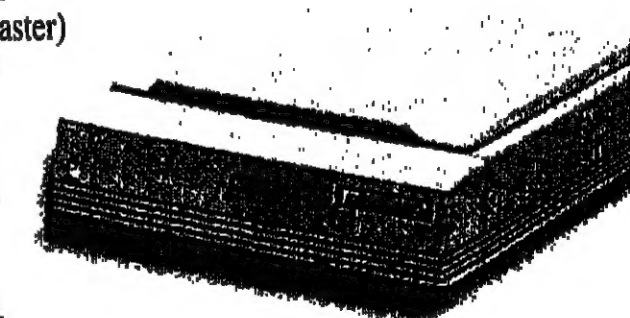


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Flying High

By Angela Levine

It is not hard to fathom why the biblical tale of the sacrifice of Isaac has proved an attractive metaphor for local artists dealing with aspects of the father-son relationship, or themes of valor and sacrifice. But the reasons why more than a dozen leading Israeli artists are attracted to the classical myth of Icarus and Daedalus remain obscure, even after viewing a group show mounted by Ruth Manor on this topic.

The legend, described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, deals with the flight from Crete on wings of feathers and wax designed by Daedalus; and how Icarus fell into the ocean and drowned, after he flew too close to the sun and the wax in his wings melted.

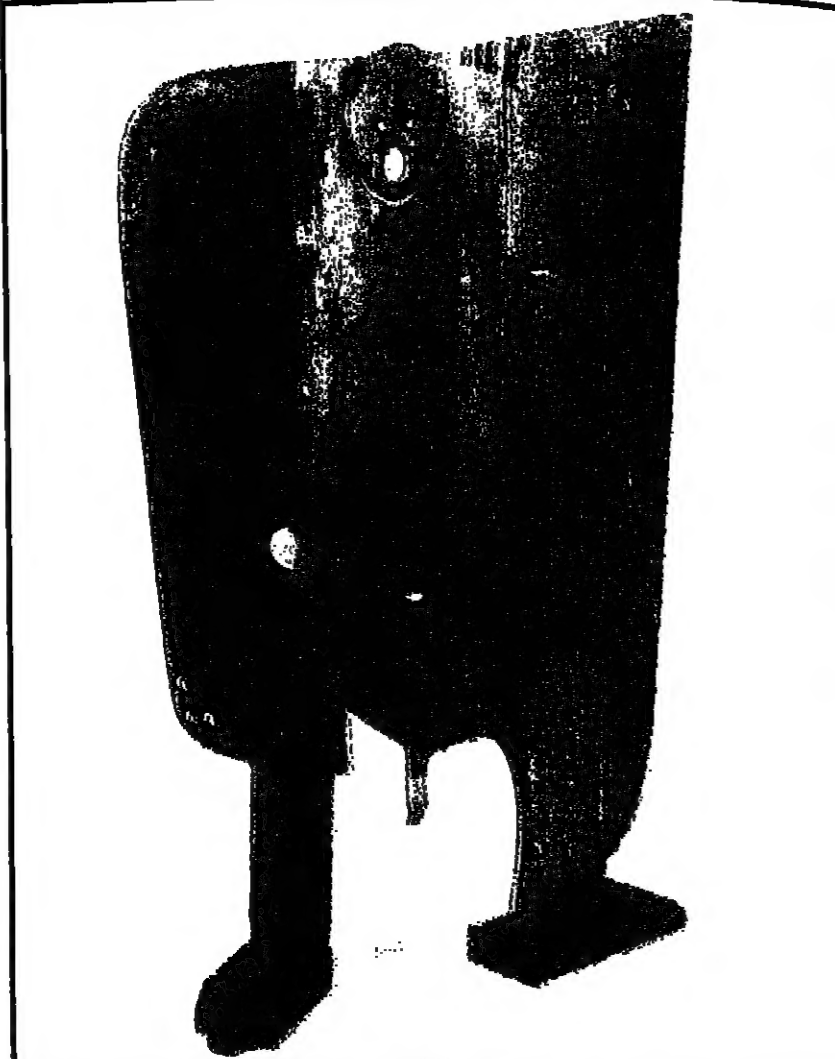
Some of the participants in this show utilize the legend in a similar way to the Sacrifice of Isaac (see the drawings of the late Avraham Ofek, and the paintings of Shmuel Shitman, a photographer trying his hand in another medium). Yosi Bergner's sketches and painting with themes of imprisonment and grief introduce a new and alien character into the classical myth, that of the grieving mother.

The motif of the fall, with its biblical connotations of punishment for arrogant behavior, is taken up by a large number of artists. I particularly liked Audrey Bergner's delicate watercolors in which the geometric spread of Icarus's wings recall her paintings of Beduin tents; Michal Rovner's fine photograph of a human fire-ball shooting across a mottled sky; and a pair of powerful black-and-white woodcuts by neo-expressionist Asaph Ben-Menahem, one of which shows angels supporting the falling body of Icarus. Distinguishing his work, apart from its large size, is the unusual viewpoint, as if the action were taking place above one's head on a Baroque ceiling.

There is also a strong showing from Martine Agmon, whose wood-sculpture shows the body and face of a terrified Icarus fused with the waves of the sea.



Tova Lotan: oil on canvas (Chelouche Gallery, Tel Aviv)



Martine Agmon: 'Icarus,' wood sculpture (Petah Tikva Museum)

This screen-like work, influenced by tribal art and, very probably, Kadishman's large corten steel "Sacrifice" series (represented on the Tel Aviv Museum plaza), brings to mind the phrase "a geometry of fear," used to describe the character of English sculpture of the 1950s.

Missing from this show are works by Tumarkin and Bak, but some photo-reproductions might have been offered instead. Tumarkin has utilized the Icarus theme as a variant of his target-track-projectile assemblages; while Bak's paintings connect both to this legend and the "Sacrifice of Isaac" through depictions in which a father and son are decked out as pilots; with their bodies weighed down with metal wings and harnesses, flight and freedom are an unattainable dream. (Art Gallery, Yad Lahanim Museum, Petah Tikva.) Till June 18.

theless, it is his weaknesses which are the focus of these confident, quietly witty compositions. (Chelouche Gallery, Tel Aviv.) Till June 21.

IN CONTRAST, viewing "Above Golden Fingernails," a gallery installation by Noam Dror, a Bezalel Academy graduate domiciled in France, is an unrewarding task. Painted on the walls are the silhouettes of anonymous demagogues; sited on the floor are small sculptures which could have been made by a child: blocks of soap bound with chains and a pair of silvered sentry-boxes. The gallery assistant kindly proffered the explanation that Dror is expressing his vision of world history as a cycle of militarism and repression. Unconvincing.

Even more puzzling are cutouts of the letter N, the first initial of Dror's name, pasted on the wall with words like "diamond" and phrases like "feet of ice" printed on them. This show can be recommended only to those who like puzzles: an esthetic experience it rates a zero. (Julie M. Gallery, Tel Aviv.) Till May 30.

TOVA LOTAN'S new oil paintings have a touch of class about them that is missing from most of the new shows in Tel Aviv. Their central image is the shadowy form of a human head which originates either from a photo of Lotan herself, or video clips of an anonymous man, depicted full-face or in profile.

In one set, which recalls to mind the white nail pattern paintings of Düsseldorf artist Günther Uecker, Lotan hammers colored or diamond-headed pins into the surface of her canvases, producing some scintillating effects of light and shadow.

However, these pins have another purpose. They are the instrument through which Lotan vents her anger on the opposite sex. In several instances, she "blinds" her victim's eyes (a male head) with a sheaf of pins, an act which recalls the biblical story of Jael who killed the Canaanite leader, Sisora, by inserting a tent peg into his head.

In a second group of works, the male head is treated in other ways: in small, well-executed and colorful oils, as flickering strip-images like those produced by an automatic photo-machine; and in larger, more deliberately painted versions where the man's head and shoulders are shown from behind.

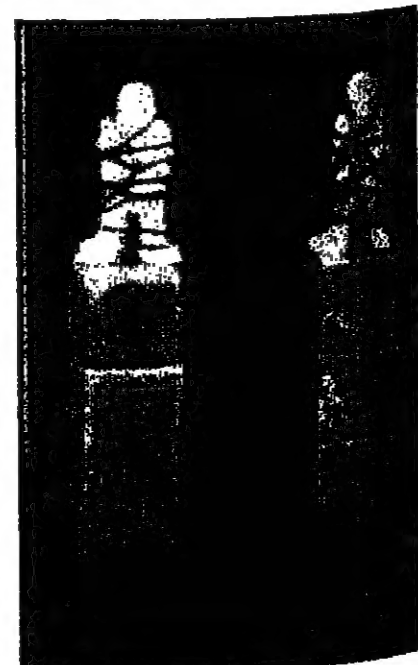
There is no doubt that Lotan's mystery man possesses a certain allure. But never-



Karl Appel: 'Cry For Freedom,' (Sotheby's Amsterdam, May 30)

and remains its most famous memorial to the Nazi air attack on the city. One of the first shows of the then controversial Cobra movement was held in a Bijenkorf store in 1949.

There is no doubt that Lotan's mystery man possesses a certain allure. But never-



Noam Dror: detail of installation (Julie M. Gallery, Tel Aviv)

Gender Benders

By Meir Ronnen

A lively and eclectic theme show of painting, photography, sculpture and an occasional mixture of media, now at the Jerusalem Artists House, is just the sort of exhibit that is sorely missing at the Israel Museum.

Entitled "Gender Bents - Shades of Sexual Identity" it comprises a happily varied set of works that, as pictures, also rise above the theme: nearly all are clever in approach, individual in style and accomplished in technique. Most, but not all of the works by the 15 participants are recent; none have been seen in Jerusalem before.

Mounted for this venue - with ministerial and municipal aid - by guest curators Nirith Nelson and Hagai Segev, who have provided a smartly produced and well-written English-Hebrew catalog, this exhibit's accent on doing rather than theorizing would probably be considered insufficiently high falutin' for the Israel Museum's curators.

The aim of the show is to remind us that distinctions between the sexes are not always clear and never were. The variants include hermaphrodites, bisexuals, cross-dressers and more lately feminists who found an androgynous core in modern society.

The three main modes dealt with here include ancient myths and the ideal of physical perfection; an examination of identity through self-portraiture; and constantly shifting contemporary sexual perceptions. But again, what distinguishes this show is not so much the exploration of the theme but the interest provided by the nature and standard of each individual work. Most provide both admiration and enjoyment.

For instance I was intrigued by the single-image figures of Boaz Kalzman, not because of their lack of gender and sexual characteristics, but because of the way that Kalzman draws and paints at the same time, while achieving a Matisse-like breadth and without being simplistic.

Similarly, I admired the highly individual pop-culture renditions in ink and watercolor of Gary Goldstein's self-portrait and symbols of transformation and drag figures with both male and female parts, but chiefly for their color and hieratic drawing.

Realism's representative is Hava Reucher, who elsewhere has exhibited a series of elderly nude women with some-thing of the dispassionate frankness of Lucien Freud. Here she shows a nude man squeezing the nipple of another middle-aged male in an amusing parody of a famous Renaissance painting. Two other nude figures engage your curiosity again and again: are they man or woman?

I'm all for humor in art and not taking portentous themes too seriously. Cleverly amusing is Dafna Ganani's sex-change outfit fashioned from latex and three baby-bottle nipples. In total contrast are the expressionist neo-classical action drawings of Amazons made by Miriam Cambar, who also shows a sculpture of similar figures, each growing a single aggressively pointed breast that is almost a weapon. A similar breast crops up in Roee Rosen's oil on copper of St. Eugenia, a lovely lady who disguised herself with a beard in order to study, Yentl-like, in a third-century monastery (not BCE as the catalog has it).

Also effective are two striking drag self-portraits by Jacob Mishori, achieved by working paint and oil pastel over large photographic prints.

Other capable participants selected for this show are Renven Cohen, Naama Cechavi, Carina Kaye, Pamela Levy, Rena Negri, Dalit Sharon, Shmuel



Boaz Kalzman: painting, 1992

Shitman and Daniel Wajman. Worth seeing.

DOWNSTAIRS in the entrance gallery of this venue are lively landscapes by Kinneret-born Rika Shalev, a sometime art teacher. Well handled and composed, they yet lack a sufficiently individual point of view and above all, interesting color harmony.

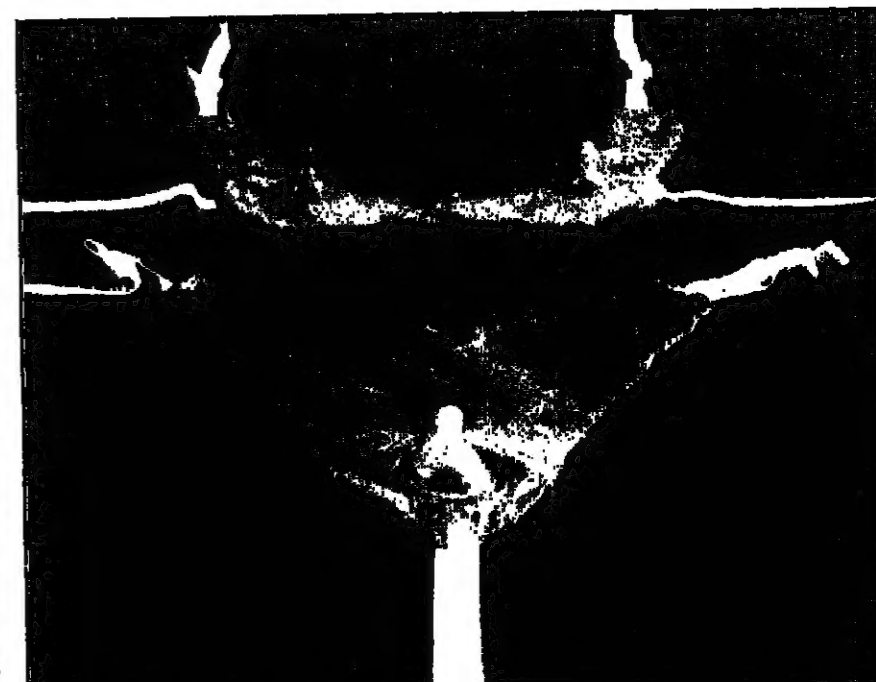
Up in the mezzanine gallery are paintings by the two latest Ish-Shalom Jerusalem Prize winners. One consists of widely representative collection of delightful watercolors and painted collages by Louise Schatz, one of those rare and lucky souls gifted with a special abstract music. Made over four decades, these works on paper look as happily fresh and convincing as ever.

Born in Vancouver, Louise was a member of the California Seven group; it was in California that she met and married painter Bezalel Schatz, son of the founder of the Bezalel school. They settled in the ancestral Schatz premises in Jerusalem in 1951 and helped establish the artists' village at Ein Hod, to where the widowed Louise has now largely retired. This award to her is long overdue.

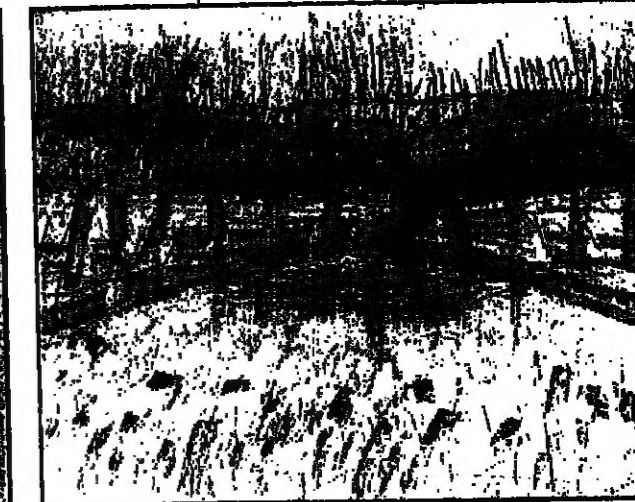
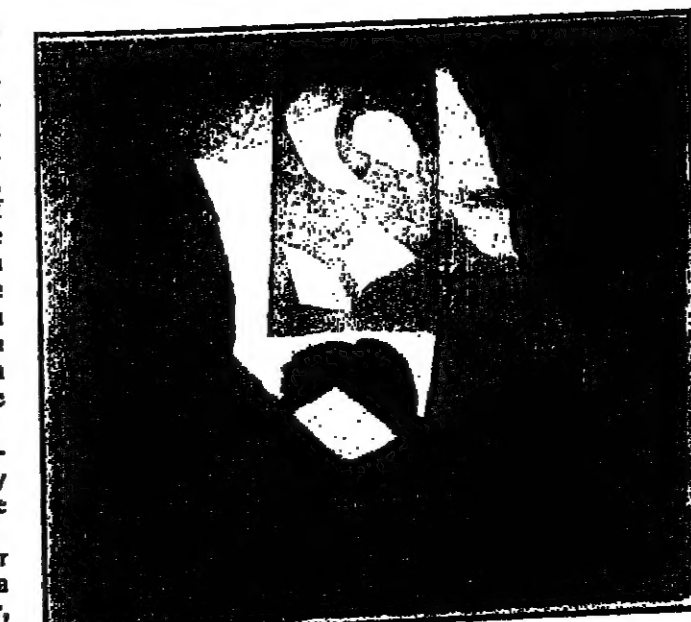
Also on view are mixed-media paintings and a single wood carving of a grotesque by the other prizewinner, self-taught art teacher Tami Bezalet-Shochet (b. Israel, 1953). Her low-key limited palette paintings are energized by overlays of scribble and form a sort of declension of the Moshe Kupferman-Raffi Lavie-Avraham Ellat line; in general they lack clarity but one of them is quite effective. (Jerusalem Artists House.) All shows till June 12.



Jacob Mishori: Self-Portrait, mixed-media, 1978/9



Dafna Ganani: Sex-change suit, latex, 1994



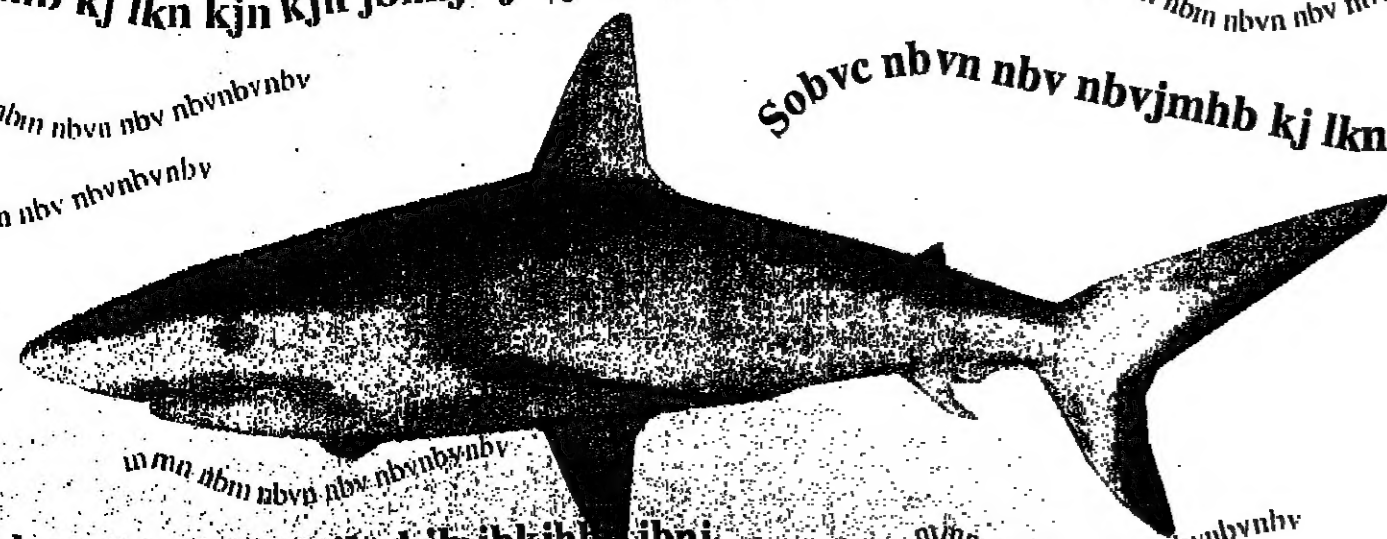
Tami Bezalet-Shochet: painting, mixed-media, 1995

(Left) Louise Schatz: 'The Moment of Greening,' watercolor, 1989

Don't you read the paper?

You are all geared up for a day trip to the Sea of Galilee. As you approach Tiberias, you notice an unusual number of cars coming in the opposite direction. Funny, you think, where can they all be going? At a red light, you lean out of the window and ask what's going on. "Don't you read the paper? There's a rumor that a poisonous fish, dormant for 2000 years on the sea-bed, is menacing bathers".

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Grave New World

Look out, you sexists, polluters, oppressors and imperialists.
The Big Bang Coalition has come to civilize us.

By Sam Orbaum

The first of the entourage stepped out of the plane into the bright sunlight at Ben-Gurion Airport. The friendly El Al steward took her elbow and gallantly guided her out the door. "Welcome to Israel, ma'am," he said with a smile.

She grabbed his arm, twisting it sharply. He howled in agony. "I am a woman," she hissed at him, "not a cripple. Touch me again and I'll have you arrested."

The rest disembarked without harassment. The last of the entourage spat derisively at the whimpering steward. "Men!" she sneered.

They grabbed their luggage, marched through customs and assembled outside the departure gate, where their bus awaited them.

They did not come here to tour the holy sites, bask on the beach or pat immigrants on the head. They were here on a barnstorming mission to change the world.

They were the feared, hated, revered, reviled radicals of the Big Bang Coalition, an umbrella organization for some of the most militant isms on earth.

They had already achieved notable results.

In Greece, feminist Delilah de Castro of Women on the Warpath revived the Amazons, convincing hundreds of women to cut off a breast in protest against Greek chauvinism.

In New Guinea, Juan Freedman of the Radical Left for Human Rights went on a hunger strike in support of cannibals.

Blanca Schwartz of the anti-racism Equality or Else made headlines in Greenland, where she attacked the lack of Hispanic mayors.

Environmentalist Diana Panopoulos, of Assault on the Earth, warned the Russians to show a little more concern for the ozone layer when they're burning down Grozny.

Shirley Manson of the politically correct Watch Your Mouth! told the people of India they should call themselves Native Americans.

And now they were in Israel. They had a lot to do.

Group leader Joan McCarthy led her troops onto the bus, except for Delilah de Castro, who threw herself under the bus. "Sexist provocation!" she shrieked.

Bill's the bus driver, a Palestinian woman from an oppressed village in occupied territory, asked what the problem might be. Delilah said she'd rather be run over than board a vehicle bearing the word "MAN" on the front.

"Oh, but that's only the manufacturer's name, not their policy," Bill explained. Shirley giggled, and whispered to Diana: "Bet it's the first time she's been under a man."

McCarthy hacked off the offending logo, and Delilah crawled out, kicked a hole in the grille and boarded with an air of triumph.

The bus drove off, and McCarthy took the microphone. "We will be arriving in the racially divided occupied capital in about 35 minutes. We have a full itinerary. On the way to our hotel, we pass the Knesset, where we'll stop for a quick scream at government policy. We will arrive at the hotel for a complimentary cup of orange juice and a sit-in to protest the construction of its pool on the site of natural rock formations. Then we will hold the manager hostage



until all political prisoners are released, eat supper, wash up and then lay siege to the Chief Rabbi's house for not being an equal-opportunity employer."

Juan Freedman watched the scenery go by. "Nice country," he said.

McCarthy burst a vein. "Open your eyes, man! You're looking at a hell-hole, human-rights-wise. See that farm there? That's a notorious slave-labor kibbutz, where human beings are made to work for no pay. Those wrecked vehicles by the roadside are a monument to carbon monoxide poisoning."

Diana joined in. "And that forest —"

"You mean," politically correct Shirley said, "that vertically inclined verdancy aggregation over there on the left?"

"Yeah. It was imposed on a site of natural desertification, another sordid example of environmental manipulation."

Juan felt sick with disgust. Diana thought she knew why: "Fumes. From a nearby garbage dump. Whiff it, Juan."

Shirley's eyes opened wide. "You mean they have a domain of superfluous unwantery, right here in the Holy Land?"

"No, I mean a goddamn garbage dump," Diana said.

Blanca became alarmed. "I'll bet it's upwind from a neighborhood packed with lower-income units. You know, I read somewhere that people here are paid benefits based solely on the fact they originate from foreign countries. An outrageous example of reverse prejudice."

"Worse than that," Juan said, "I understand they entice Jews from Arab countries to relocate here, where they're forced into the army to wage war against their own lands!"

"That's the way of the Zionists," Bill's the Palestinian joined in. "You know, they even entice Christians from abroad to do their dirty work, stealing our jobs and con-

demning my innocent people to squalor and subjugation."

Blanca moaned sorrowfully. "Those poor Palestinians."

Shirley corrected her: "Those poor Zionistically-challenged Semites."

THEY ARRIVED at their Jerusalem hotel, demonstrated, rioted, nosed, freshened up and gathered again at a bus stop, headed for downtown.

The bus came. Juan, wearing a Che Guevara T-shirt, got on. The bus driver, wearing a Farrah Fawcett T-shirt, threw him out. "Sorry, mister, this bus is only for women."

Delilah couldn't believe her ears. "Right on!" she said joyously. She boarded with much ado, faced the passengers and raised her fist. "Way to go, girls. You've overpowered the chauvinists, told 'em where to get off, hit 'em where it hurts! If you can push them off this bus, you can lock them out of your homes, kick them out of your beds, take over their jobs! Today, this bus; tomorrow, the world!"

"You don't understand," said one of the women, her shaven head covered, eight bedraggled children clinging to her drab ankle-length dress. "Our men put us on this bus to keep us out of theirs."

"What? Sexually segregated buses?"

"It's God's will," the passenger explained.

"We women know our place," said another, "safe from our own temptations. If we set eyes on strange men, the next thing you know, we'll be reading newspapers, watching television, getting ideas of our own. Then how will we serve our husbands and their sons?"

Delilah frowned. McCarthy dragged her out into the fresh air and the bus pulled away. The coalition was dazed. When she came to, she wanted to know just what sort

of an Israeli man could treat women like this. She grabbed a fellow about to get into his Mercedes and wrestled him to the sidewalk. He was wearing tight pants. A gold chain nestled in his exposed hairy chest.

"Pig!" the feminist screamed, pinning him to the ground. "How dare you Israeli men squelch our natural temptations, rob us of sexual self-determination, make us into mindless birthing machines!"

He grabbed her hair, kissed her roughly and grinned. "Relax, motel, I use a condom."

"Rape!" she shrieked.

"Unilaterally countenanced fornicatory relationship," Shirley echoed.

He wriggled out from under her and fled. "So, now we've met Mr. and Ms. Typical Israeli," Diana mused. "What do you think, Delilah?"

"I think we've seen it all."

"Oh, no, we haven't. Look!"

Across the street, a woman was sitting bowed at the feet of a soldier. Delilah went nuts. "Stop, you macho moron!"

The soldier swung around. Delilah gasped. "But you're a woman!"

"Yeah, and this scum bag was caught in the act."

"Wrong, sister, she's a woman. A victim. Your own kind. Let her go."

A police van drove up and a policeman took possession of the prisoner. The coalition leapt into action.

"Police brutality!" McCarthy howled. "Male chauvinism!" Delilah shouted.

"Political suppression!" Juan screamed. "You're stereotyping persons of the Moslem race," Blanca charged.

"Justifying the propagation of the military-industrial complex, which contributes to pollution," Diana added. "But she attacked an innocent bystander," the policeman said. "She's a —"

"— Freedom fighter," Shirley injected helpfully.

BIL'A GAVE the coalition a thorough tour of the country.

They visited Bnei Brak, where synagogues are segregated to prevent Sephardi women from praying to the Jewish God together with Ashkenazim.

They were chased by a raging black-clad mob all the way to Ramat Gan, to the Safari, where animals are denied the right to privacy.

In Bethlehem, Shirley held a politically correct protest against the depiction of Jesus as Jewish or male or white. "Our Lord may have been an African-American," she told journalists, citing Louis Farrakhan as her source. "Jesus was probably a woman," added Delilah, "who had to masquerade as a man to get ahead in a male-dominated society — which was, at the time, of course, Palestinian."

Blanca said Zionism will continue to be a form of racism "until you people open your borders to all the unhappy Africans who don't happen to be Jewish."

At the end of their mission, the Big Bang Coalition organized a press conference at the airport, and staged a surprise sit-down strike on the runway. "We appeal to the Arab world not to make peace," McCarthy told the journalists, "until Israel learns to behave like a civilized nation."

"Right on!" Shirley shouted, and corrected her: "Like a Christian nation."

BUT SERIOUSLY